

**The Academy of Religion
and Psychical Research**

**1994 Annual Conference
Proceedings**

**EXCEPTIONAL
HUMAN EXPERIENCE:
THE CALL TO AN
EXPANDED
CONSCIOUSNESS**

The Academy of Religion and Psychical Research
P.O. Box 614
Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002

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**EXCEPTIONAL HUMAN EXPERIENCES:
THE CALL TO AN EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS**

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
THE ACADEMY OF RELIGION
AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH
NINETEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**CEDAR CREST COLLEGE
ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, U.S.A.**

JUNE 5-7, 1994

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THE ACADEMY OF RELIGION AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1994PROCEEDINGS

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The Proceedings of the 1994 Annual Conference of The Academy of Religion and Psychical Research, P.O. Box 614, Bloomfield, CT 06002, an academic affiliate of Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, International, P.O. Box 7868, Philadelphia, PA 19101. The editor is Boyce Batey, P.O. Box 614, Bloomfield, CT 06002-0614. The owner is Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, International, an organization incorporated under the Pennsylvania General Not-For-Profit Corporation Law to conduct business in the State of Pennsylvania (with no stockholders), represented by The Academy of Religion and Psychical Research with a mailing office at Bloomfield, Connecticut.

STATISTICAL DATA	AVERAGE FOR PRECEDING YEAR	SINGLE ISSUE NEAREST FILING
Total copies printed.....	250	265
Paid circulation:		
Sales from office.....	6	0
Mail subscriptions.....	191	215
Total paid subscriptions....	191	215
Free distribution.....	5	0
Total distribution.....	202	215
Office use, leftover.....	48	50
Total.....	250	265

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Boyce Batey
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A NEW PERSPECTIVE OF REALITY: KEY CONCEPTS IN THE WORKS OF BÔ YIN RÂ

Bodo Reichenbach

This paper is to introduce the German-born author and painter Bô Yin Râ (Joseph Anton Schneiderfranken (1876-1943)), whose forty works on topics of religion, philosophy, and metaphysics not only are themselves occasioned by exceptional human experiences, but are meant to also guide their reader to experience for themselves what lies behind the images and symbols of religious thought and life. These writings are exceptional as they are not, according to their author, based on speculation, but convey empirical insights into the realities and laws of spiritual existence. The paper also will discuss a number of important concepts as they present themselves from that exceptional perspective.

Among the many exceptional experiences recorded and examined none, I think, could be regarded as a clearer "Call to an Expanded Consciousness," and thus address more fittingly the theme of this year's Conference, than should the actual discovery of an empirical perspective of metaphysical realities. A perspective, in other words, that is not predicated on assumptions, however well supported by philosophical hypotheses, but one instead, that rests upon direct and permanent experience. This paper, therefore, will attempt to show how the experience of confronting that unique perspective can be viewed not only as exceptional, but how its very apprehension will of itself expand the human consciousness: by virtue of an inner transformation which liberates that consciousness from its dependence on conjecture, by shedding light on the effective structure of reality. The shift from a conjectural to an empirical model of metaphysical existence might in its consequences be compared to abandoning the Ptolomaiic worldview and to recognize instead the facts uncovered by Copernicus.

The results effected in the sixteenth century by the empirical approach to physical science has a potential analog in the writings of the author whom this paper recommends to your attention. That is to say, the works of Bô Yin Râ present--or, if you prefer, "claim" to present--essential elements of spiritual reality from the perspective of objective knowledge. He describes the nature of his own position in the following passage:

"I am not a "seer" who takes his "visions" for the Truth. Nor an ecstatic, hallucinating in the frenzy of his nerves, who is no longer master of his senses. I am not a "poet," whose unconstrained imagination can bring forth any kind of "higher world" to suit his taste and fancy. I am not a "thinker," who molds his universe from thought, subject only to opinion and the rules of logic. Eternal life, for me, is permanent experience. And what I say seeks only to bear witness to that timeless Truth whose every act creates and manifests Reality (About My Books, 33)."

To indicate more clearly what distinguishes this author's sources of experience it should be noted that he did not gain his insights or perceptive faculties by way of reading, travel, or the search for truth in this existence, but instead--and this indeed may strike one as exceptional--in the course of long experience before his birth into this present life. As he explains, one cannot lucidly perceive the inner structure of eternal life, and thus present authentic witness of its laws, unless one

has already consciously existed in that very life, and known its innate laws, for ages prior to one's brief existence here on earth. A person born with the capacity objectively to know the laws of spiritual life then is able to disclose to others what they need to know if they would find that same reality within their own existence.

Perhaps not everyone is able to imagine that individuals with such capacities can actually be found, or even do exist. Immanuel Kant, for instance, in a chapter titled "On Opinion, Knowledge, and Belief," very near the end of his Critique of Pure Reason, voices a conviction that even some convinced believers in paranormal research may secretly embrace. He writes:

"Doubtless, there is no one who can claim he truly knows that God exists and that there is a future life; for if he knows that as a fact, he is the very man that I have searched for all my life."

One can only speculate how Kant would have reacted to the expositions of Bô Yin Râ; for here he would, indeed, have met a man who stated very plainly that he spoke from knowledge in these matters, not from mere opinion or belief. The great philosopher who so effectively demolished all pretensions logically to prove that God exists would likely have concurred with Bô Yin Râ, however, on the point that metaphysical realities as well can only be perceived by virtue of sufficiently developed spiritual senses, just as one needs healthy senses fully to experience physical reality.

Let me briefly mention a few biographical dates of this exceptional author. The appellation Bô Yin Râ, with which he signed his works, is the spiritual proper name of the author and painter Joseph Anton Schneiderfranken. He was born in Aschaffenburg, near Frankfurt am Main, Germany, in 1876. Very early in his life he showed artistic talent and a great desire to become a painter. At the age of sixteen he was accepted as a student at the renowned Staedel Art Institute in Frankfurt am Main. Here he also enjoyed the support and friendship of Hans Thoma (1839-1924), a celebrated artist and teacher in Germany at that time. After his graduation in 1899, Schneiderfranken continued his studies and work in Vienna, Paris, and Berlin. In Vienna, his "spiritual compositions" had been greatly admired by the internationally recognized painter, etcher, and sculptor Max Klinger (1857-1920).

Of particular significance both for the artist and the future spiritual author was a year of creative work he spent in Greece, during 1912 and 1913. From Athens he published his first brief works, selected chapters that later appeared in one of his earliest books. As a matter of historical interest, I might mention that these earliest publications of 1913 were addressed to the members of the German Theosophical Society. At the time he thought this group might be a receptive audience, since they at least had learned of and accepted the existence of the hidden source, and of the "spiritual brotherhood," whose ancient secret wisdom he was permitted to make public in the West. In this respect, however, his expectation proved too optimistic. His theosophical readers were understandably reluctant to accept his views on some of their most cherished doctrines, including the authenticity of the Mahatmas, and his explicit reservations concerning all experiments in the occult.

In 1923, Schneiderfranken and his family moved to Switzerland, where in 1925 he settled in Massagno, Lugano. He died there, creative to the end, in 1943. His artistic legacy comprises close to two hundred paintings, including some sixty "spiritual perspectives," works that represent nonphysical dimensions. His forty published books embrace a thirty-two volume cycle entitled The Enclosed Garden, and eight supplementary works.

Here let me briefly comment on the name with which he signed his works because he knew it as his spiritual proper name. In a short article on the subject he discusses the difference between a name that only is an arbitrary

label one may choose and change at will, but which does not reflect the character and substance of the person so addressed, and, on the other hand, authentic proper names, whose structure, form, and sound express the true identity and nature of their bearer. Such names are not a matter of personal choice, nor can one simply change them. It follows that, to have a proper spiritual name, one must already be a conscious individuality existing in the world of spirit. The author realized, of course, that this unusual name was bound to prove an obstacle and cause some readers to reject his books. To remove this stumbling block he writes that anyone who did not like the name defining his identity could call him by whatever name they chose; but even they, he says, should look at what he wrote, because the matters he discussed affected them as well (Concerning My Name, 19).

Let me summarize the contents, form, and purpose of the cycle he collectively entitled The Enclosed Garden. Although the individual titles of that cycle address concerns of critical importance for any reader's spiritual orientation, and thus are made accessible to everyone, in practice many find these writings "closed" and simply pass them by. That is completely understandable, considering that readers nowadays are inundated with whole libraries of books that seem to offer similar ideas, accommodating every need and taste. In addition, popular belief assumes that every road must ultimately lead to "Rome," so that it hardly matters whom one chooses as one's guide. Most firmly closed, however, are these books to readers who already found what they were seeking and thus no longer feel they need to search elsewhere. Scientists and scholars, in particular, have always found it inconceivable that the solution to humanity's perennial problems could possibly appear outside their trusted disciplines. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)

As a result, these books, which now have been in print some seven decades, are still not widely known. Yet, given that their contents touch on matters that were closely guarded secrets in the past, and which may need a measure of protection also in the future, the various factors that contribute to these writings' being overlooked, in fact perform a useful task; because they serve as a protective shield, assuring that their contents, which are now an open secret, continue to be safe. In other words, the strait gate to enlightened knowledge nowadays is hidden by the colorful mirage of "virtual reality."

As to the "open secrets" he discusses in his books, the author points out that those insights are not so much his own, as rather part of a tradition shared by all his peers, and that this knowledge ultimately represents the oldest esoteric wisdom of mankind. It was his given task, however, to make this knowledge public in the West in modern form. As he explains:

"What in this day my books convey anew is knowledge that had been disclosed to human souls millennia before our time; and many since have found it as Reality, through personal experience. Today that knowledge is again to find perceptive souls, and it already has found not a few who have discovered--in themselves--what through my books I show to be within the range of human spiritual perception" (Wegweiser, 39).

Similarly, in another context, he adds this:

"The facts I publish in these books have never--from the origin of human language on this earth until this day--been stated so explicitly for all the world to know. It was not possible to do this before now. The things my books say openly today have throughout history been closely guarded, accessible to only very few. But also in the future shall these things remain a secret to all who are not born to know them" (In eigener Sache, 15).

By contrast, if one sought to characterize the readers to whom these books are more specifically addressed, it would be individuals who har-

bored serious doubts about the exoteric teachings of traditional religions, their rigid dogmas, and attempts to reconcile the facts of modern science with the beliefs in primitive mythologies. It would be individuals who nonetheless are conscious of the deeper, spiritual sources that have inspired and sustained the great historical religions through the ages; individuals who want to find those sources, which continue to protect all spiritual life on earth, but who see little meaning in external symbols. Finally, it would be individuals who instinctively distrust all effortless enlightenment, achieved in a few hours at reasonable rates, as likewise all experiments conducted in abnormal states of mind.

It is to offer orientation to such readers that the books of The Enclosed Garden were published. They are not meant to persuade the reader to accept their contents in blind faith, but instead provide criteria that will allow one thoughtfully to reach one's own conclusions. That is to say, these books are not just theoretical, but point the way toward recognizing the basic spiritual laws that govern the dimensions constituting all reality; laws one must obey if one would live in harmony with the established order of creation. For even as the laws that govern physical reality are disregarded at one's peril, so too the hidden laws of spiritual life exact their due without respect of consequences if one should disregard them.

In the case of physical nature, the various disciplines of science have uncovered many of those laws through observation and experiments and now are in possession of vast amounts of knowledge accumulated through the centuries. In respect to spiritual laws, however, the situation is more difficult, in that the structures underlying the respective laws are not so readily accessible to observation and experiment. Nonetheless, some of their fundamental principles have found their way into the consciousness of certain human beings, thereby providing their contemporaries with guidelines for enlightened conduct. Most notably those insights are embedded in the ethical teachings of the advanced religions, in the inspired intuitions of the great philosophers and sages, and in the sacred scriptures and traditions of antiquity. But since the ancient sources also have preserved much speculative fiction, which nonetheless is promulgated with no less conviction and authority, it often is impossible, for lack of an unerring touchstone, to separate poetic superstition from authentic knowledge.

To differentiate between beliefs that have their roots in fact, and others that are lacking this foundation, doubtless will require someone who is able to observe the workings of those hidden laws; just as one needs experts in the physical sciences to distinguish fact from fiction in their respective fields. Sifting through the dogmas of religion for elements reflecting spiritual reality is much like reconstructing an intricate mosaic that was broken up and whose authentic pieces have been mixed with countless foreign fragments. Only someone who had known the work before it was destroyed, and who can recognize the genuine components by their shape and color, is able to rebuild the lost original. In this way, the books of Bô Yin Râ shed light on many concepts found in the traditions of the great historical religions that derive from insights based upon objective knowledge. Given that all such authentic knowledge originates within the selfsame source, although its outer form is molded by the accidents of place and time, it will not be surprising that there exists a common bond uniting all religions that are nourished by that source. Bô Yin Râ points out, however, that the primal fountainhead to which all cultures and religions owe their spiritual wisdom and authority is not itself of any one religion, nor does it favor one tradition more than any other.

From the perspective of that primal source, all religious systems were initially designed to serve a practical purpose; namely, to provide for every human soul, even the less enterprising, a well-marked, relatively

easy, if indirect approach to spiritual reality, which is itself of no specific creed. Religions, thus, exist to serve as bridges, "re-connecting"--as the word itself implies--the physically incarnate spiritual being with the source of its nonphysical experience of existence. In other words, "The sabbath was made for the sake of man, not man for the sake of the sabbath."

Let me now examine some important concepts Bô Yin Râ discusses in his works from the perspective of such primary experience. In his usage, the term "reality" embraces three discrete domains: the world of matter, including its invisible dimension, which is by far its larger part; second, the all-embracing, boundless ocean of the soul--the only "absolute" reality of whose dynamic elements the human soul is formed on earth, and thus allows the human being to participate in spiritual life, depending on the person's level of development; and, finally, the timeless worlds of spirit, the innermost dimensions of Reality. These three domains are each eternal without beginning, without end; were not "created," as it were, by anyone but simply are forever changing emanations of the underlying elements of Being. Although distinct and separated as a result of the perceptive faculties through which they are experienced, the worlds of matter and of spirit interpenetrate each other both in time and space. Bô Yin Râ describes that singular connectedness by comparing it to the way that water penetrates a sponge in the sea.

Since the human being is in reality a spiritual individuality which for a brief time is immersed in physical existence, it is endowed with the potential to participate in both domains of life. The human person's spiritual, in other words "eternal" life, is consequently not a state of being that only begins at the moment of death, but is in fact already present in the very life we live on earth; only it is here perceived through physical senses, and not, as after death, exclusively by means of spiritual senses. During physical life, those inner senses are for the most part dormant. Only when they are sufficiently developed can the human being get a sense of what the concept "spirit" actually denotes.

Conscious, active life in the domain of spiritual reality presupposes the possession of a spiritual body, an organism that allows one to exist in that domain, just as one needs a physical body to exist on earth. Originally, the human being, in its spiritual existence, eons before birth, was endowed with such a body; it lost that form, however, when it desired to experience life in physical reality. It was this actual event which later would give rise to the symbolic concept of the Fall, the primal separation from the realm of light and the subsequent, inevitable incarnation in animal form. But even in this form the human being has retained a rudimentary spiritual organism through which it is connected with its origin. Still, the present organism is inadequate for spiritual life in its higher forms, and so the human being must receive a new and perfect organism in order to be able to exist within the Spirit's higher realms. As Bô Yin Râ explains, this fact is meant by the mysterious passage in the Gospel of John, where entry into the kingdom of God is only possible if one be born again "of water and of the Spirit," which are symbolic images of concrete spiritual substances (John 3:5f). In this context, Bô Yin Râ points out that the attainment of that perfect spiritual body does not occur immediately after death, but only after the completion of a long time of development. Spiritual "rebirth," thus, denotes an actual event within the realm of spiritual existence. It is not simply the adoption of a mental attitude or change of mind.

In the works of Bô Yin Râ, the concept "spirit" has a precise and very concrete meaning; for it refers exclusively to the dynamic substance that underlies all beings, forms, and structures that exist within the Spirit's worlds. In a chapter titled "On the Spirit's Radiant Substance"

included in The Book on the Living God, he emphasizes the importance of understanding very clearly that this radiant substance has nothing whatsoever to do with any mental operation or activity. He stressed this point repeatedly, because in German usage the word for "spirit," i.e., Geist, had long become depreciated by being taken as a synonym for "intellect," and thus had lost the meaning it once had, and which it must regain if one would actually experience what the word denotes. To convey a sense of that experience and of its underlying cause, he writes as follows in that book:

"The Spirit of eternity, which consciously exists in its own light, is not some nebulous mirage that only pious faith might fathom. For that Eternal Spirit is not only quite as "real" as is a tree, a stone, a mountain; or as a bolt of lightning as it flashes from a cloud, but its reality is absolute within itself. It thus provides the justifying grounds for our mental concept of "reality," which has no true equivalent in the contingent realm of matter. But given that not even objects of contingent, physical reality are altered in their essence by any thoughts about them held in human minds, how can one seriously presume that mental notions might affect events of absolute reality?" (The Book on the Living God, 234)

The same work contains a chapter titled "The En-Sof," in which the concept "spirit" is considered in its cosmological significance. Contrary to popular ideas and scientific theories about the way all things began, this author writes:

"The En-Sof--the Infinite, existing of itself--is Spirit, which in itself encloses everything that is. The forces of the universe, by contrast, work as causes generating numerous effects. And this misled you to pursue the quest for an imagined first, or primal cause. Yet there has never been a "first cause" of the kind that you envision. God eternally brings forth Himself, rising from the chaos of the unformed elements of Being. Nothing here is "cause," nor anything "effect." There is alone the Spirit's free, self-knowing will, which manifests its very being, for itself, as "God" (The Book on the Living God, 101).

As indicated earlier, the physical universe was not "created" out of nothing, but rather represents a "reflex," as it were, of actions in the realm of primal causes, in which are found the patterns of all forms encountered in the universe.

Elaborating on the concept of "reality," he continues in that chapter "What you regard as the reality of the observable--as well as of the unseen--universe is ultimately "real," only as it represents no more than the effect created by the elements that underlie the Ground of Being, made manifest at various levels of activity and form. The universe exists because the elements of Being cause it to exist; not, however, "of itself" (The Book on the Living God, 104).

And here also touches on the concept of "creation":

"You still are speaking of a "God" whom you consider the "creator" of all things. A "God" who brought forth, and sustains, an everlasting world in His own honor, declaring His own glory. Yet such a view of God, and of creation's origin, could only be excused in ages of the past that still possessed no knowledge of the countless ways in which the elements of Being manifest themselves today; knowledge that alone should be sufficient for a thinking mind to put away the old ideas. Clinging to them in this day and age is at the same time blaspheme and folly. God is the creator of only His own Self in all things that exist. And everything that truly is embodies Being that is God's. God brings forth Himself alone, and He did not, as you believe create the human being and the world."

The moral consequences of that different perspective are suggested in a passage from a chapter titled "What Must Be Clearly Understood":

"You stand in awe beneath the starry hosts of night and cannot grasp what causes their existence. And yet, this mighty universe with its unnumbered stars and galaxies is but the least effect and witness of a force--and its inherent will--to which you, too, owe your existence. To you, however, it is given to know the higher revelations of that force--in truth, its very Self--if you are willing to be shown the way that Love and Mercy have prepared for you" (More Light, 194).

No less different from the traditional understanding of the concepts "God" and "Spirit" is Bô Yin Râ's redefinition of the concept "soul." He discusses this from various aspects throughout his works. In the chapter "The Only Absolute Reality" in The Book on Life Beyond he explains the term as follows:

"To comprehend what life "beyond" is in reality, you must begin by recognizing three domains within the cosmos. First, there is the realm of physical perception, or the world of matter. Then there is the realm of spiritual perception, or the world of timeless spirit. Third, however, there is the domain of the mysterious, cause-effecting elements of Being: the only absolute Reality, as the effect of which exist all forms of sense perception, and their respective worlds, both in the physical as in the spiritual dimensions of the cosmos. These hidden, cause-effecting elements of Being are manifest within the mortal human being as the component energies that constitute a person's timeless soul. Once having crystallized around a human will, and thus collectively assuming form for the duration of a human life, these elements become imbued with, as it were, the individual's specific temperament and character, as it is manifested in that person's timeless will. And in this way the nature of those elements is molded for all time, so that they henceforth must obey the given impulse until it has attained fulfillment. If that fulfillment is denied them in the lifetime of the person who imbued them with their now exclusive impulse, these energies will manifest themselves again in other human lives, until they finally achieve their goal: by being unified with the eternal will incarnate in a mortal life, and thus becoming integrated with that person's will" (The Book on Life Beyond, 88).

Seen from that perspective, the human soul is not an immaterial body, but a field of energy, composed of countless elements imbued with independent will which crystallize around a human self and thus create that person's consciousness. Bô Yin Râ uses two images to convey an idea of what the word denotes. He writes: "Your soul is like an ocean, composed of countless individual drops, each possessed of latent power; or like a cloud alive with myriads of dynamic elements" (The Book on the Living God, 70).

What follows from that understanding is a radically different explanation of the causes that have led to the belief in numberless reincarnations. According to Bô Yin Râ, it is not the individuated self, the spiritual essence of a person that is born again and again, but rather those dynamic elements which constitute the human soul, and which are forced to manifest themselves repeatedly in successive human lives until they have been integrated with a human will that liberates them from their impulse. Given that those elements preserve the memories of all their previous experiences, the possibility is always present that such memories may surface in a person's consciousness, and thus create the notion that the person may have lived on earth before. It should be noted in this context that any of those elements that we possess in life, but fail to integrate in this existence, detach themselves from our will at death and later seek to manifest themselves in other lives. According to Bô Yin Râ, there are only three cases in which reincarnation may occur in the traditional sense. One, as a result of suicide; another, in the case of infant death; and, finally, when a person's will toward physical experience is so excessive that one life here is insufficient to extinguish that desire. Normally,

however, this is not the case. On the contrary, the author explains, "no human self will ever feel the slightest longing to return to life on earth, no matter what it had to leave behind, no matter how impoverished, how destitute of energies its soul might enter life in the domain of Spirit, where it will continue and complete its ultimate return to God" (The Book on the Living God, 225).

Another concept Bô Yin Râ shows in a very different light is that of the human psyche. As he explains it, the psyche is a purely physical phenomenon, an automatic, necessary part and consequence of the material body's life, at the death of which it likewise shall disintegrate. In as much as the existence of the psyche is a necessary part of any physical organism, it should not be surprising that also animals possess that kind of hidden organism and its faculties. The range and the potential of the human psyche is, understandably, far more developed and perfectible, as can be seen in the remarkable accomplishments in all the human arts and sciences. It may be a sobering idea, but from that viewpoint all artistic creativity and talent resides within the powers of the psyche, not in the soul, nor in the spirit. The latter can express themselves, however, through the tools and forms the psyche offers them.

A point that also should be noted in this context is the fact that all phenomena of the occult, or paranormal, from clairvoyance through telepathy, are typically expressions of the human psyche, and as such have no connection with the worlds of either soul or spirit. As a result, psychical phenomena can only demonstrate their own reality, but neither prove, nor disprove, anything beyond their reach, such as the existence or objective nature of things within the Spirit. Human beings, to be sure, are able to experience spiritual life, but not by virtue of experiments within the psychic field. The Spirit's life and substance does not allow itself, according to this author, to be subjected to scientific enquiry. It can only be experienced owing to those highest inner faculties with which all human beings are endowed, and which are in effect themselves of spiritual origin.

There is one final concept I would like to mention briefly which also is discussed in a variety of contexts in the works of Bô Yin Râ. It is a concept that has gained much currency in western thought, perhaps because of its appealing name, although the principles on which it rests were clearly recognized since ancient times. The term I have in mind is "karma." As generally understood, the word refers to the relationship between some cause and its effect as it results from human action. Bô Yin Râ, however, makes the point that "action" in this context must be understood to mean not only actual deeds, but also every word we speak, as well as every thought and wish that stirs our mind, in short, each impulse of our will. The consequences of such actions all affect our lives, for better or worse, until we shall have reached the end of our spiritual journey, that is to say, the point where we began. Then only shall we finally be free again of the oppressive consequences we have generated through our actions. Closely related to the concept karma is the insight that all human life is governed by the law of inescapable accountability. While here the consequences may become apparent only after death, it is well to contemplate one's actions in the light of their future effects. Lest they become the "prison" from which there will be no escape "until one has paid the uttermost farthing" (Matthew 5:24).

In conclusion, I would like to suggest how the examination of this author's works may well become a call that challenges the reader to seek and to experience a more expanded consciousness, and in what way that consciousness can truly be expanded. It will be evident from the foregoing presentation that the works of Bô Yin Râ are meant to help the readers comprehend the underlying structure of spiritual reality. On that basis

they may form their private worldview, using concepts resting on facts, which they are able to confirm by virtue of their own experience. To be sure, initially this author's expositions can all be treated as mere claim but as one studies them more closely over time, and gains a sense of their integrity and scope, or finds in them compelling answers to so many questions nowhere else provided with the same degree of clarity, nor expressed in similarly perfect form, one cannot help concluding that the author offers more than simply baseless suppositions. This recognition in itself can prove a somewhat startling experience, since human beings who can speak of spiritual matters with authority are not encountered every day. If readers then desire to expand their consciousness by following the guidelines offered by this author, they will find that such expansion does not involve elusive, unexplained, yet ultimately only physical experiences, but rather leads to the recovery of inner senses of perception, and thus to the experience of what is truly meant by the expression "spiritual life." An insight of that kind proved a defining moment in the life of St. Augustine, when, at a time of searching and confusion, he heard a voice instruct him--it only was a child playing in the neighbor's yard, and yet it seemed an oracle--singing, "Tolle, lege! Tolle, lege!" which is being Englished, "Take the book and read it!"

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Bodo Reichenbach is a retired professor of German from Boston University; he still teaches a tutorial in theological German at Harvard Divinity School. His address is: 23 Vista Circle
 Arlington, MA 02174

OUR PRIMARY SENSES BEYOND THE FIVE

- Claire Walker
Annual Conference 6/94 A.R.P.R.

What causes burnout on a job? What makes us sleepy at a lecture? What triggers an instant rapport with or strong dislike of another person? What impels us to speak out when keeping quiet would be safer? Why should praying make anyone feel better about something? How do we know when or whom we can trust? --Or do we? How in the world can we ever look back gratefully on a bad experience? Wherein lies the popular appeal of a Blobby, Miss Piggie, or Shuldig and Zoobie?

Questions like these, and the incidents recounted in Appendix 2 for lack of time to include them in my presentation, can be matched (probably improved upon) by everyone here.

"The collapse of materialism has left a great deal of dust in the air," said R. DeWitt Miller in the 1950's (Garrett 1952 372). Now that we are in the mid-nineties, I believe it is imperative to assemble and recognize certain signal developments which may be making the 20th and 21st centuries a watershed in human history. Further, along with research on the brain, on consciousness and mind-body relations, we have gathered intimations of astounding new horizons in scientific, religious, paranormal and metaphysical directions. Even though the concept of quantum physics, like many other frontier concepts, is not clearly understood, quantum and many of the other new ideas have found their way into the mainstream of public awareness. This is a good indication, I believe, that we do have an alternative to the chaotic collapse heralded by the doom-sayers. In the long perspective there is reason for our faith and for savoring the thrill of being alive here and now.

Though it is too early to foresee all that may come out of the research being done on mind-body relations, what has already been achieved has brought us to a major turning point in medical practice and personal psychology (Janiger 1993, Chopra 1989 and 1993). Exhortations are persistently reaching us to open ourselves to a transformation of our whole mental infrastructure. Of such a transformation, or the way to bring it about, we do not understand the implications as yet, but we are realizing the sensational scope of the revolutionary change we are experiencing. Our responses to the incredible acceleration of change which we are seeing range all the way from a passionate search for new anchors to a cynical apathy. Very sad it is if we have really become a "nation of victims," tending to be neurotic about our future rather than looking forward to it (Sykes 1993, Gelatt 1993). But perhaps our social disintegration will turn out to be "creative destruction", instead of unmitigated catastrophe.

I would argue there is little doubt we are coming to a new self-image which frightens some and intoxicates others. Although we have been telling ourselves over the ages that we are essentially spiritual, not just physical beings, I think it is abundantly clear by now that we are preponderantly neither of these. We're not just physical; we're not yet very spiritual. We are psychic beings in transition from animal to spirit, and as such are moving from a five-sensory to a multisensory nature (Zukav 1989 27, Hubbard 1993 32, Heussenstamm 1993, Kumar 1994, Bohm 1987 207, White 1974 31, Klimo 1987 306). Within these multisensory dimensions, some of our senses are psychic. During my years in the Academy, I have become convinced that psychic development is so central to our present being and stage of evolution that there is no point in either categorically denying it or defensively proclaiming it: the psychic exists and we all have it and use it. Let's stop looking at it as an uncomfortable fringe activity, and instead recognize its crucial role in human evolution.

The essential psychic potential I am talking about is not limited to, or identical with, the animal attribute familiar to us and conventionally rather disdained. But it is also important to distinguish psychic sense from psychic power. The power aspect of psychic manifestation has been the subject of most of the literature and just about all of the research. In contrast, our psychic sense is in some degree already realized and in daily use by large numbers, if not all of the people. It is neither a physical thing, nor simply a "sixth" sense called intuition. Psychic sense in operation is not spectacular like the phenomena which trouble CSICOPS. From the level of psychic sense we simply have an extended perception which is not explained, – which has not been seriously investigated, but which does receive fleeting notice in diverse places. Perhaps our senses are a continuum like the spectrum of light or sound. Or if we choose to think of attention as psychic energy (Csikszentmihalyi 1991 & 1993), we can see psychic senses along this spectrum. In any case, I suggest our psychic sense may be part of the mechanism of our transition into some kind of future.

Thus far in my study I have not found a working definition of a psychic sense as distinct from a bodily sense or an emotion. But I will propose tentatively that:

A psychic sense is a direct mental knowing not characterized by physiological alert or activation of any bodily system. Its incidence is sometimes persistent, but is oftener so delicate or so fleeting that the psychic sense can readily be ignored or suppressed by the primary sense, strong emotion, or the environment (Broughton 1991, Becker 1992: see long quote in Appendix I infra).

I have become convinced that the topic of psychic sense is an enormous field receiving little notice as such, but deserving a great deal more. Relevant references are so numerous, but so passing and so scattered, that a 30-minute paper can be no more than an overview, and I am trying to be selective. What I am presenting here is the tiny tip of what I hope will be

an inviting iceberg.

A SENSE PYRAMID

We can, I believe, perceive our own psychic senses in ordinary operation. On the sheet which has been distributed is a diagram of some ways in which these senses manifest in a continuum from most common to most crucial. This is only a tentative representation, and certainly not exhaustive.

The foundation of the pyramid, of course, is the set of five primary senses, thought to have developed in a sequence. Though humans are all expected to have all five, we know there are significant individual differences, especially in the sense of smell, latest to develop. In addition, there are puzzling anomalies that are being attested and recorded (Corliss 1976, 1992, 1993; Treffert 1989). Eventually these may turn out to be linked to our psychic evolution (Grosso 1992). It seems to me also possible that at least some anomalies are more closely related to psychic power than to psychic sense.

The next pyramid step asfter the bodily senses includes warmth and chill, movement and balance, but not in the bodily meaning of these words.

A sense of welcome felt or withheld when we enter a room or approach a group of people is familiar enough to us to make warmth and chill in the psychic context fairly self-evident. When I moved to the large Leisure World community in California, I had to leave behind my religious affiliation of over 40 years, with no equivalent in my new location. In a few months, however, such a psychic warmth was coming to me from a different group in the community, that I was overwhelmed and watched myself quite deliberately and knowingly joining a church to which I am still not sure I belong.

Chill in its psychic effect is just as powerful as warmth. We are coming to realize that certain groups nationwide feel a subtle rejection which they carry around within themselves as a seething rage, even when they are enjoying apparent success in American culture. Our violence-torn society loudly attests this.

The other pair of senses on this second pyramid step is also readily recognizable. I have given them separate names, but they, too, are complementary. Psychic balance includes a sense of order, of right proportion, that engenders in us a vague but present uneasiness when we sense a lack. Plato's ideal of the Golden Section in design was described in a lecture by Dr. Robert Bonnell in October, 1993, which is not in print (Long Beach Theosophical Society). The Golden Section envisages a graceful linear division into sections apprximating 62% and 38% of the total length or height. I think we can posit that this proportion has a feeling of rightness to us in other applications, such as the way we feel about allotment of our time. How long should a given task take to complete? To how much of our

waking time does our job have a claim? A 40-hour week doing repetitive work which allows no latitude for initiative or deviation leads persons in our society to casting about for some other outlet for their freedom of action, and the results are not always good for either the individual or society. Many decades ago I heard Margaret Mead predict that a time would come when just 10 minutes of expertise would replace the 40-hour work week. Will this be a byproduct of Information Superhighway?

In hundreds of lectures and many books, Krishnamurti taught that inner order is a prerequisite to outward order. Maybe this psychic sense of balance or order comes to us from a deep inner knowing that we are enclosed in a universe which is "a mighty living and intelligent organism, striving toward a goal too vast for our own tiny human minds to envisage" (Garrett 1952/1957 298 quoting a British surgeon).

The conflict between values which can be associated with psychic balance exacerbates the present upheaval and brings forth all sorts of bizarre twists in the news. As Arthur Miller recently put it to the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, we are a democracy committed to at least two incompatible absolute values. The two he chose to discuss were the right of the people to know, and the right of the individual to privacy. The same incompatibility can extend to the right of the people to know versus the right of their government to protect them from certain information, exemplified in the controversy around UFOs which flares up from time to time in the press or some demonstration. In July of 1993, on one of these occasions, members of Operation Right to Know were claiming that the U.S. Government has documentation since 1947 of visits from outer space and were demanding release to the public of the facts.

Other serious conflicts have been unhappily apparent around us. Our society seems to have lost track of the dependence for their very existence of all rights on the fulfilment of responsibilities. If masses of the people become more devoted to claiming their rights than to accepting their responsibilities as citizens, rights will disappear and not just diminish.

Turning now more specifically to the psychic sense of movement, we have a range of subtlety. In this psychic sense there is, for one, a sense of direction which can be forward as a feeling of progress or growing, or backward resulting in discontent and discomfort. The latter may explain familiar phenomena of boredom, burnout, and variations including violence and addiction. The positive indications, by contrast, will include some sense of growth, the exhilaration of novelty, adventure, or excitement. This psychic sense can be activated by the experience of a mystical event or an EHE, or even by winning a lottery. Miracles of all sorts are satisfying to the psychic sense of movement.

In a different setting, perhaps the fever of self-transformation is also part of this activity which feeds on the psychic sense of movement. Sri Eknath Easwaran's picture of cosmic transformation is an example of individual satisfaction of a psychic sense of movement.--

"It is possible to travel slowly but surely into the depths of consciousness and there transform our personality. We can actually make a new person of ourselves; we can become the kind of person we dream of being. When we have the daring and determination to make such changes, a tremendous beneficial power is released into our lives. Slowly and gradually, but without fail, that power will transform our world(Blue Mountain Center of Meditation, Bulletin 1993)."

Why do we get a powerful drive to change our patterns of behavior or even whole lifestyle? While not the whole explanation for exercising to reduce, the resolve to eat healthier food, the urge to disclose homosexuality, or the drive of a Dr. Kevorkian, a psychic sense of movement (or progress toward wholeness) seems to me to be an ingredient. Voluntary as opposed to prescribed or compelled change has to involve some psychic sense. As we move up the hypothetical pyramid I have offered, I suspect we may advance further from the unconscious through the conscious into the superconscious. If these terms have reality, and if my contention that we all possess inbuilt psychic senses has validity, then the whole concept of evolution has a great deal more content than a mere animal will to survive. What is involved is an urge to grow, to realize potential which itself is ever growing.

Successful solving of problems is tied in with this urge to grow. Sometime around 1950 I was told by Dr. Henry Smith, then heading the language Training section of the State Department, that Americans have a national pattern of expecting any problem arising in our society to be solved in approximately two years. For that period there is general patience on the part of the public. But at the end of that time, if no solution has been worked out, "heads begin to roll."— It seems we have changed since then. But I wonder if frustration of our problem-solving expectation fuels the army among us of collectors who hoard things from paper weights to old cars. In any case, a hankering for perceived growth, for a feeling of getting somewhere, is something we all have, and I am suggesting it is in the nature of a psychic sense.

On the next step of the sense pyramid we are getting further away from any physical involvement with the psychic, into the mysterious realm of self, identity, personality, ego. Whatever the genetic and environmental ingredients of the individual essence of the human being, the whole is increasingly more than its parts precisely because our psychic senses are evolving (Grosso 1992, Goswami 1993, Zukav 1989). Connectedness, identity, and level of awareness are all psychic senses having to do with our self-image, each person's developing answer to the question, who and what am I? Belonging to one or more groups of people, a strong desire in most of us, is more than mere gregariousness. It is a deeply inlaid psychic need, calling for satisfaction at many levels.

In recent years the significance of the psychic sense of identity has taken a focus on the aspect of autonomy in particular. Take charge, take control of your life, have become slogans of the saving advice given even to terminally ill or seriously disabled patients (Gazzaniga 1988 236, Drakeford, 1990, Hubbard 1993 34).

Zukav's explanation of present social woes as a result of our relying on external (horizontally directed) rather than developing authentic (vertically oriented) power seems relevant (Zukav 1990, 1993). About 15 years ago I came across a quotation which grows in its cogency with the psychological discoveries we have been making since then. The author was discussing what he considered the three critical factors in a child's development: heredity, the environment, and an "autonomous force."

"The autonomous force is the individual's own conscious, self-determining, internal motivation to develop. Through exercising this force individuals can overcome influences of genetic constitution and social environment. Once active, the autonomous force is stronger than both heredity and environment in its influence over development." (Colangelo 1979)

Enough has been said and written about levels both of human consciousness and of existence to make the working concepts quite familiar, whatever the terminology used. The implications of these hypotheses for the idea of psychic sense are less obvious. Regardless of semantics, we all do have patterns of awareness beyond our five physical senses. Some think of the conscious, the superconscious, and the subconscious. Freud and Jung used the terms unconscious and collective unconscious. The term collective conscious is also used. What if there is a shower of cosmic energy of various vibrations around us all the time? What if there is Soul and also Beast? What if contemporary claims of channeling are based on some reality as yet not perceived and verified? -- I see no reason as things stand now to reject out of hand many ideas floating about. We will eventually come to understand many things in the realm of psychic sense.

In the future of continuing investigations of levels there will still be imaged angels and other visual phenomena being reported (Grosso 1992 123-8), research on the efficacy of prayer (Braud 1990, 1994; Dossey 1993), meditation (Easwaran Bulletins from BCM), making a quantum leap (Chopra 1989), channeling (Klimo 1987, Hastings 1991). Where intuition fits in all of these various tunings of psychic sense is a separate question. Though it might be argued that these senses are all gradations of intuition, I think they differ too much to be lumped together under that heading.

I would like to call attention to some distinctive modes of reference to senses which seem to be referring to levels of consciousness and the associated psychic senses. The Academy's Conference program 10 years ago was on a topic which has come into increasing prominence in public concern. That topic was holism (Proceedings 1982). Earlier than that a Baltimore psychiatrist, Dr. Walter Jahrreiss was talking about two basic "pulls" that

together influence the choices we make and the way we live. The horizontal pull is bound up with the problems and needs of daily living -- relations with others, a job, physical maintenance, and such concerns. The vertical pull is the urge toward spiritual or transpersonal growth. Responding to both pulls is essential to the total person, as Maslow showed in his ladder of development, but the horizontal demands can overwhelm the vertically sensed challenges which are then neglected in large segments of our lives. Zukav talked about these two pulls (Zukav 1989 99-100), and pointed out that "Our species is evolving from one frequency range in the spectrum of non-physical Light into another, higher range of frequency." In this frequency we can communicate with forms of life invisible to the five-sensory personality (p.97). Barbara Marx Hubbard goes further with the evolutionary concept. She sees humankind as actually a transitional species (Hubbard 1993). This is not quite the same as a species in transition, but the idea is coming out in varying expressions, starting with one by Edgar Mitchell (White 1974), several by David Bohm (1987), and Ravindra Kumar (JRPR 1994). Kundalini and all the various schools associated therewith can be regarded as a theory of human transition. In a 1993 lecture an artist cited a Futurist who goes by the name FM 20-30 and predicts that by the year 2030 the human species will have been replaced by the post-human species (Paul Heussenstamm 1993 at the Theosophical Society in Long Beach).

Does the sense pyramid I have proposed attempt to separate one from another various aspects of psychic sensing that really are all shades of an arising higher consciousness? On the next step are a sense of fairness and a sense of compassion, both so much parts of human nature, and so obvious in their meanings and manifestation, that they can arguably be identified simply as aspects of the psychic sense of right balance. -- Or perhaps they are further levels of higher sense perception in general.

Isn't it true that we all have an innate sense of fairness; in individual cases it sometimes goes beyond defending what we conceive as fair play for ourselves into an intense desire to see others also given fair play. Championing the underdog exists, thank goodness, as well as an instinctive response to distress. An anecdote told by Dr. Chopra is an unusual example of this compassion on a subtle psychic level. Chopra has an Indian surgeon friend who was a gourmet fancier of omelets, for the making of which he enjoyed a reputation. However, reports Chopra, the last time he was with his friend for a Sunday brunch, the surgeon refused an omelet, saying he could no longer stomach eggs. Chopra recounts the story. --

He [the surgeon] was stirring up an omelet at home while his six-year-old son, Arjun, looked on. As each egg was cracked, my friend tossed the shells aside. By chance a few of them fell into a small brown bag of birdseed that was going to be set out for the sparrows.

"Oh, don't do that," Arjun said seriously. "The birds will think their babies have died, and they won't want to eat." My friend is usually proud of his boy's precocious remarks, but all at once he

couldn't abide the taste of the omelet he was making, or any other. (Chopra 1989 201)

Of course we can speculate on the possibility of some mental or emotional quirk possessed by the surgeon. I see more likelihood of psychic sense at work. Said H.P.Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society and movement, in an official message to the American section in 1888: "Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man, and when people have learnt to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanly." -- What is going to help us make this transition if not our psychic sense as we become multisensory creatures?

At the top of the sense pyramid is the psychic sense of purpose. Many terms convey a thought of the psychic sense of purpose and its importance to the unfolding human individual. SOUL is coming into new prominence. We have only to note recent books with the word in their titles, e.g., Frontiers of the Soul, The Seat of the Soul, Care of the Soul, Recovering the Soul, by authors Grosso, Zukav, Moore, and Dossey respectively. The word SELF, especially when written with a capital, can be an equivalent or a related concept, e.g. The Self-Organizing Universe by Jantsch, The Self-Aware Universe by Goswami, The Evolving Self by Csikszentmihalyi. Furthermore, discussions of self-transformation and self-transcendence are about the soul, whether the term is used or not.

Another term related to these is from the Indian tradition of dharma. According to Sanskrit scholar Radhakrishnan, dharma is the essential nature of a being that determines its mode of behavior. So long as our conduct is in conformity with our essential nature, we are acting in the right way. Theosophists combine the idea of dharma with their pivotal concept of spirit, and see evolution as the ultimate return of the individual to a truly spiritual nature in the fullest sense. Consequently, the surviving element of a person is regarded as the spiritual essence of the person, -- or soul. To this surviving essence Eckankar and Urantia give the prospect of space travel. The latter may or may not be called "soul" travel, since in Urantia it is the personality which is considered to be the essence which survives and travels in space to reach the ultimate fulfilment.

In everyday living, purpose is often given form in perceived meaning to any particular individual. "All my life I have been a seeker for meaning," wrote Barbara Marx Hubbard (1993 21), and she explained this search as "a call to serve a great and unknown cause." When she found this life-changing and life-claiming cause, she called it the "Planetary Birth" now taking place.

In his highly informative and provocative chapter in Intangible Evidence, Bernard Gittelsohn (1987 ch 7 199-214) speculates on the true nature of psi and approaches the sense of purpose as I am using the word, but from another angle. I want to cite two ideas from the many in his chapter, -- even though Gittelsohn is probably thinking of psychic power rather than psychic sense. For one idea, Gittelsohn comments on Nicholas Khokhlov's view of archetypes: they are products of the collective unconscious, and have power to mold the collective conscious as human thought and its archetypes

evolve (Gittelsohn 1987 207-8). Certainly this level of expression or communication can be, if not likened to, at least confused with, psychic sense.

Gittelsohn later observes (p.209-10): "Many indicators point to the fact that psychic information must be meaningful to us to break through to consciousness." Then he refers to the psychic Gerard Croiset and his refusal to take a Zener card test for J.B. Rhine on the ground that guessing cards had no meaning or involvement for him. Again, this looks like a matter of activation of a psychic sense of purpose. As individuals we all have opportunities to get involved in very many situations which have no point for us; some of us are more sensitive and more obdurate about refusing to participate, than are others. I believe this is an issue of activated psychic sense of purpose which can be taken seriously or forcibly ignored. The flow or blockage of creativity is relevant here, as well.

Howard Mickel observed (ARPR Proceedings 1981) long before the Academy adopted EHEs as a theme for concentration, that psychic experiences stimulate spiritual awakening and give renewed meaning, value and purpose to those who respond "to the intrinsic meaning of these experiences." In other words, EHEs can activate the psychic sense of purpose to a motivating degree. I believe this is the sense behind Colangelo's "autonomous force," as well as in Csikszentmihalyi's "optimal experience," which embraces a sense of ultimate goal, of intentionality and resulting harmony within the person (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). This psychologist says the realization of meaning in one's activity brings enjoyment which is far greater than any happiness derived from pleasure. For optimal experience is autotelic, an end in itself. This wonderful psychic sense does more than assure our survival through steady growth; it supports the incredible human achievements being documented now in fields of health, sports, discovery and inventions, and personal triumph against odds (Garfield 1984, Murphy (1992). This sense not only maintains in us a reason to survive, but also stands at the pinnacle of the psychic sense pyramid in the present stage of human evolution.

CONCLUSION

The full significance and dimensions of this human-divine potential will continue to be uncovered in our time. In the April '94 Journal there was a statement by Rhea White well worth underlining:

I propose that we are alive in a pivotal time in Western civilization when many institutions are changing dramatically; people have an opportunity to see something new under the sun, and they can play an important role in bringing it about. The wisdom we need to incorporate in our lives is not new, but the circumstances under which we must do it are unprecedented.

I submit that the manifestation and nurture of psychic sense in everyday use by ordinary persons is a great hope in a future that for the immediate prospect looks a bit black. It is being well said that there are among us saints and sages, but no saviors. -- Is it not evident that we must be our own saviors, more deliberately attuning ourselves to the All beyond us, and doing our own evolving in an unfolding universe? In all the speculation over a Second Coming, voices are timidly suggesting that indeed it is taking place now, consciously or not, in thousands of individuals of all religions and races all over the world. Is it a dawning psychic sense of distant purpose and vast cosmic connectedness that, once we begin to recognize and respect it, will save our species from destroying our planet and ourselves? We do not have to live the Atlantis myth; we may already be started on a different and saving way!

Windows on this way are opening all around us, in the form of concepts being introduced now, in our lifetime, in the troubled '90's. Putting some of them together, we can see human kind --ourselves-- as a transitional species, coming into its multisensory potential as it evolves toward realization of its spiritual essence. Despite byways and false turns, the species gradually makes its way. It discovers it has a kernel of transcending reality and calls it soul or some similar symbolic name. Most members of the species do not understand but begin to sense the mysterious non-locality of much of their experience, and puzzle over glimpses of some inscrutable, overarching source which they call God.

The fortunate few find the supreme satisfaction of a dedicated devotion to some fiercely concentrated effort. Usually they are trying to see clearly through a window which they notice at some stop-over on the way, or to extend a hand through it to the other side. They never accept gladly the catastrophic destruction of their achievement, because they cannot grasp that every destruction is a transformation. But the autonomous force within them will drive them on to pass through the thousands of stop-overs ahead.

See Appendix, Handout sheet, and Bibliography

APPENDIX I

Robert O. Becker, author of *Cross Currents*, has contributed a thought-provoking article on the mechanisms by which humans perceive the cosmos. From the many stimulating ideas he presented, we select his rationale for believing that an electromagnetic basis may exist for the reception and processing of psi signals.

A key concept in Becker's scheme is his belief in the presence, in humans and other organisms, of a dual system for receiving and processing information arriving from the environment. The system we are all aware of and which scientists study in depth is the nerve-impulse system, which transmits digital signals; i.e., 0s and 1s. This system connects to all our everyday functions. The second system Becker designates as "primitive." It transmits information in analog (continuously varying) form via electrical currents and magnetic fields, rather than as impulses along neurons. This second system is not recognized by mainstream science.

Becker advances the notions that: (1) Psi-type phenomena are actually handled by the "primitive" analog system; (2) The flood of information normally arriving from our sensory organs via the "modern" digital system masks the psi-type signals; and (3) These assertions are consistent with the elusive nature of psi phenomena in both everyday experience and the parapsychological laboratories. Becker's ideas also jibe with experimental evidence that the psi faculty is suppressed by electromagnetic storms, which (presumably) act only upon the "primitive" analog system.

Becker readily admits that the physical basis for the generation, transmission, and reception of psi signals is unknown. (Becker, Robert O, "Electromagnetism and Psi Phenomena," American Society for Psychical Research, Journal, 86:1, 1992.) Quoted by W.R. Corliss in Science Frontiers, #81, May-June '92.

The quote is followed by Editor Corliss's own comment:

We use the adjective "psi-type" in describing signals traveling along the primitive analog system because we may also be receiving other kinds of signals not yet recognized even by the parapsychologists, and which are also masked by everyday sensory data rushing brainward. After all, we must not let the parapsychologists restrict our vision of the universe.

Wainwright House, Rye, N.Y., was the scene of 6 seminars on spiritual healing conducted in 1967-68 by Ambrose and Olga Worrall under the sponsorship of the Commission for the Study of Healing, chaired by Dr. Robert W. Laidlaw, who comments in the book:

"During the concluding discussion the group focused on the formation of an organization to explore these new channels and roads, the newly opened world beyond the newly opened doors. However, one of the essential purposes of this organization would be to research into what

are called 'life energies.' This would be a probe in depth of the life forces, physical, spiritual, psychosomatic, and psychic, as well as the force fields created by varied patterns of life energies at work."

A. & O. Worrall with Will Oursler,

Explore Your Psychic World, p.143

"My goal is to demythologize, destigmatize, and to legitimize the exploration of expanded psychic horizons. I want to encourage people to make their own inquiries, to be their own researchers, and to become aware of their own abilities beyond the limits of the five senses." - Bernard Gittelson, p.15

Louisa E. Rhine compiled a book of case studies which she considered showed that human beings are far more than their ordinary sensory experiences and have subtle faculties beyond the physical.

She concluded with a short chapter titled "The Larger Perspective" (p.251-253), from which the following is a quote:

What can all this mean about the extended universe, the world which is the source of all our information, whether it comes through sense perception or more hidden channels?

It seems to mean that basically the different dimensions of reality are not divided as our senses show them. It seems as if perception by the senses has superimposed these distinctions on reality, and that in some ultimate way these differences of thought and thing, near and far, present and future, are only superficial, the creations of the human mind. Scholars trying to comprehend the universe have recognized that back of the world as we perceive it must lie a reality quite different from the psychological concept of it with which we are familiar. The implications of psi experiences fit in with the idea of a less limited reality and they add to it the data of observation. The meaning could be that the reality glimpsed through psi is a truer representation than the one the senses picture.

A concept of reality without the familiar distinctions, however, is almost incomprehensible to the sense-conditioned mortals we all are. A few of us may be able to escape to a degree the blinders of this conditioning. But many of us are unable to do so and no doubt will long remain uncomprehending before the mystery of the reality suggested by psi. We will continue to be unable to conceive how it can be possible to know another person's thought or perceive a hidden or future event; unable to imagine how precognition, intervention, and free will could all be facts, if such they are. This inability to "imagine" is and will be our limitation -- just as it is a limitation for most of us to be unable to feel the reality of atomic structure, so that a table remains a table; a rock a rock; and neither becomes a system of minute particles surrounded by vast space, no matter how well or ill we know our physical theory.

Nevertheless, we have finally come to accept the theory of

atomic structure as an idea, even though it never seems real to us. In a similar way, in time, with information about and familiarity with the concept, we may also come to recognize the universe as glimpsed by ESP. We will come to know about it whether or not we are able to reconcile it with the universe our senses present to us.

The world will go on just the same in any case. We shall have no more, no less freedom because we know that some dreams come true, that sometimes the distant is nearer than the near, that sometimes the future is foreseen. We shall live with these unknowns and whether we like it or not we shall even use them, when we can, to smooth our paths a bit and to avoid our little personal calamities.

APPENDIX II A Few Illustrative Anecdotes

I In Gone With the Wind, a tragic incident involved the family's black nanny and Rhett's darling little girl. Remember the movie? When the child was about to be put on a horse to make her first jump, the black woman objected, exclaiming that it was not right: the child was too young. "It ain't fittin'!" she exclaimed her black eyes snapping

She was right: the child was killed almost at once by a fall, and you will remember that the heart-broken father refused to let the child be buried for days afterward.

II. In a little book now long out of print are two incidents that I believe reflect the operation of psychic senses in powerful degree.

The first involves a dancer who in 12 years of performing never suffered any injury in the studio or on the stage. But three times in fairly quick succession she broke her leg as she was leaving her house after quarreling with her parents, with whom she lived. The worried insurance company's under-cover psychiatrist discovered that the dancer was caught between her love for her parents and her resentment of their interference in her life. After she married and set up her own household, the falls stopped.

III. In the second episode, a burly black man came upon a gruesome scene where a wrecked truck was on fire with its driver imprisoned in the crushed cab. There were three emergency trucks standing by, a wrecker, and a number of bystanders, all helplessly watching. The fire was burning so furiously that no one could get near the truck to do anything for the victim. But the black man, his face set in a cold fury, went over and literally tore that truck cab apart so the driver could be pulled out. -- How could he do it? It turned out that Sam had been helpless when his house was destroyed by a flash fire and his little daughter burned to death before his eyes. The father refused to watch the same thing happen all over again to another human being. (Germain 1956, p.114, 188)

Two stories of my own both happened many years ago.

IV. In my young years I was teaching 11- and 12-year olds, and at

the same time pursuing an interest I have always had in palmistry. The youngsters were curious, so I read a few palms more or less playfully. One little girl had a frightening sign on her hand, and I told her something very unusual would happen in her life. She was pleased at this; I told myself not to be uneasy, as I was no expert. Before the year was out, however, her father shot the little girl dead in bizarre circumstances, and badly wounded her older brother when he missed the boy before turning his gun on himself. I had never told the little girl that there was any negative significance to the sign in her hand, and there was no way to know what lay ahead or advise her how to avoid it. I didn't take so-called negative signs in anyone's palm very seriously anyway. But that was an episode I've never forgotten.

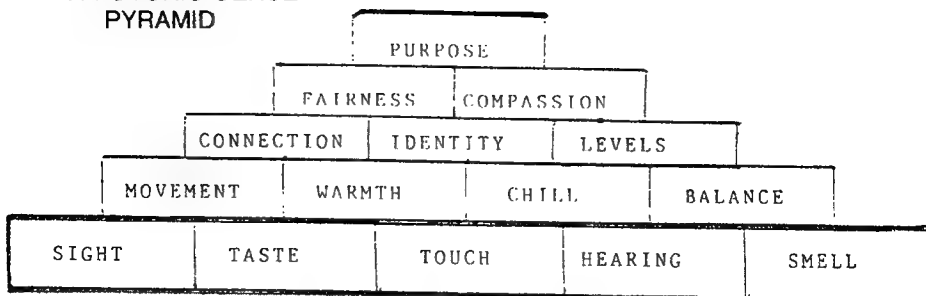
V. The other episode in my own experience was several years later, and I was a retired teacher asked by a colleague to substitute for him in what I learned was a difficult school. I was there for 10 suffering weeks, and found the school population of teens lazy, hostile, indifferent, and daring the faculty to keep them entertained. Far from respecting persons in authority, certain of these youngsters resented assignments, instructions, or limitations of any kind. This was something I made no peace with, and so I ran into conflicts, especially with one particularly rebellious boy. After a number of skirmishes with him, many of them attempts to keep him from taking advantage of younger pupils while defying all the rules himself, I was on our lunch break one day when I had a sudden impulse to walk out on the big parking lot where faculty cars were parked. It felt odd to do that; I never went outside the school building during the school day. But when I approached the area where my car was parked, there was a chalk mark on one tire, and my young dissident was lurking about with a friend of his, both of them taking on uncomfortable looks when they spotted me. I never found out what they intended, as I suggested they might want to return to the building, and they complied at once, confirming my suspicions that something was afoot.

Like Chopra's story of omelets, these anecdotes are hardly EHEs. But they are examples of psychic senses activated and perceived.

Bio

Since earning an MA from the U. of Buffalo in 1937, and completing course work for a doctor's in history in 1940, I took enough time off to be married to Ken Walker (retired professor, Goucher College) and start our family. After that I taught at all levels until retirement in 1975. Meanwhile I had continued my independent study in history, linguistics and religion. After 1975 I became a lifetime member of the Theosophical Society, and as both Quaker and Theosophist became interested in new religious movements, new age developments, the new science, and the psychic dimension of life. Now I am a member of the ARPR Board, current editor of the Journal as well as the Bulletin, and I still publish the theosophical letter named Reflections in addition to lecturing and writing.

A PSYCHIC SENSE PYRAMID



Movement includes motion, change, variety, progress, levels of interest or desire.

Balance - order, proportion, rightness in the sense of being fitting, harmony

Warmth-security, rapport, trust, invitation to closeness

Chill - rejection or reservation, distance, feeling of being drained, feeling that people are devoted more to cause than to people, being unnecessary or unwanted

Connection or Connectedness - compassion, empathy, wholeness or being an essential part of something bigger than self, feeling of higher oneness with something or someone, worth

Identity - self-respect, dignity, being in charge of self and own conditions, self-awareness or positive self-image, status, adequate attention from other persons, satisfying role, recognition

Levels- - inner order, centeredness, transcendence of the ordinary, inner certainty, feeling of being in contact with inner or Higher Truth, inspiration, being an object of special bestowal, experience of EHE, new vision or powerful new conviction

Fairness - justice, concern for others, faith in law & order, respect for orderliness of social actions/procedures, ethical standards

Compassion - pity, love, ahimsa, empathy, societal (civic st al.) responsibility, intent to help

Purpose - perception of mission, recognition of learning opportunity & tasks, meaning, dharma, fulfillment, intuitive sensitivity, creativity, response to leading perceived as from a Higher Source, a motivating deep desire, total concentration accompanied by an intensity of dedication

"The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." -John Wheeler

"Without a theory, facts are a mob, not an army." -Mark Twain

"Given a choice between changing and proving that it is not necessary, most people get busy on the proof." -John Galbraith

"Everything I have learned points to the fact that psi is inherent in us, an aspect of nature itself; it is not separate or 'different.' - Bernard Gittelson

"It cannot be denied that man has such hidden [psychic] powers and far more subtle forces within him, but they will come into active function naturally as the inner consciousness of the individual is able to utilize them properly." -James A Long

CLAIRE G. WALKER
14001 Thunderbird Dr. 4-K
Seal Beach, CA 90740
310-495-0355

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THE HOLY GRAIL: THE TRUTH AND THE FACTS

Frank C. Tribbe

What was the Holy Grail? -- it depends upon which of the several basic stories you read. The chalice (goblet) presumably used by Jesus as he presided over the "last supper," is probably the answer that would be given by most people, but there are many grail stories calling other items "the Holy Grail" -- such as, an object from the mass (ciborium, paten, ewer, corporal, missal), the body part of some early saint, a lost book, Jesus' blood and sweat saved in cruets, a platter, a bowl, a stone, a jewel. Which is correct?

When did the grail stories start? -- during the eleventh twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as a by-product of the Crusades. There were nine Crusades during the period A.D. 1095-1272, mostly from France and England, mostly against Arab rulers, presumably to free Jerusalem and environs and make them accessible to Christian pilgrims. Returning Crusaders began to speak of "the Holy Grail," but no specific source for the stories was given. Writers in France, Spain, Germany, Wales and England began to produce Grail stories, but their writings were highly diverse and inconsistent with each other.

Who made these mythical quests for the Grail? - mostly a half-dozen mighty knights, whose names, with spellings in several languages, we know principally as Arthur, Lancelot, Parzival, Galahad, and Gawain. Really? No! This is where the writers came-acropper; they wove King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table into the grail quest stories; but Arthur et al. were historical people of the fifth and sixth centuries in Scotland and northern England (Arthur lived A.D. 475-542 and fought the Scandinavian invaders).¹ The three key versions of the grail saga were written in French in the late 12th century by Chretien de Troyes, in German in the early 13th century by Wolfram von Eschenbach, and finally the English version, Le Morte d'Arthur by Thomas Malory in the 15th century.

But even if the writers put wrong (and impossible) names on the heroes, might not the stories have been true of unknown knights? Most improbable! If the stories are to be taken to any degree as factual, then the object - whatever it was - was a relic relating to the termination of Jesus' ministry and/or his passion. Who might have kept it? We don't even know where they had the "last supper." Matthew (26:18) reports Jesus as saying, "Go into the city to such a man... 'I will keep the passover at thy house.'" Mark (14:12-16) reports Jesus saying, "Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him; And whersoever he shall go, say ye to the goodman of the house..." Luke (22:10-11) uses almost identical words. John (13:1-2) gives no indication of whose house they went to, for that supper. The synonyms indicate that it was the house of a

"man," so the suggestion that it was the home of Simon the Leper or of Nicodemus seems more likely than that it was the house of Mary, mother of Mark - all of which have been proposed by scholars, or it may have been a nameless follower who was so honored.

If that relic - the Grail - came from Golgotha, who saved it? The four gospels name no one of The Twelve disciples as being at the cross; John notes the presence of the disciple "whom He loved" but many scholars now say that such could not have been John bar Zebedee, and might have been Lazarus.² The synoptics say the women disciples "stood afar off" and only John suggests they may have been close to the cross. Might the relic have come from the Tomb? Matthew and Mark report only the women at the tomb Sunday morning; Luke records that Peter went after the women did, but only looked in. Peter and the "beloved disciple" went there Sunday morning - as reported by John - but apparently didn't take anything. Except for Peter, The Twelve seemingly were frightened and in hiding from the time of the arrest of Jesus until the post-resurrection appearances began.

Yet, assuming that there was a Grail and that somebody kept it - a woman disciple or an unnamed man - where would it have been kept? Most of The Twelve left Jerusalem and environs rather promptly. Jesus' crucifixion/resurrection was in A.D. 33; except for the brief tenure in Jerusalem of Jesus' brother James, after the resurrection the centers of Christianity for the next few decades were in Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Caesarea, Alexandria, Rome and, finally, in Constantinople. If there was a Grail, and if it was hidden in the area of Jerusalem, we must wonder about its survival -- the Zealot revolt of A.D. 66 brought Roman troops and a raging war to the entire Holy Lands, climaxed by the total destruction and burning of Jerusalem and the "Second Temple" in A.D. 70, and ending when Massada was crushed in 73. Even Jewish worship was prohibited, and when the second revolt (A.D. 132-5) occurred, the Jews were forcefully scattered throughout the Empire, and the land was renamed Syria Palestina, and Jerusalem was named Aelia Capitolina. For 200 years it remained a Roman colony but all Jewish Christians were exiled and only Greco-Roman Christians were permitted to live there.

How long could a hidden Grail have been kept a total secret? - for a thousand years? - the First Crusade began in A.D. 1096. There was not a whisper of such a relic in the interim. Were there relic hunters in the early years? - well, one of the greatest such was Helen, mother of the Emperor Constantine who moved the Roman government to his new capitol, Constantinople. She first went to Jerusalem in A.D. 326, "identified" many holy sites and brought back many relics, such as the "true cross" and the crown of thorns - presumably not even scorched by the burning of Jerusalem -- yet, even she did not mention the Holy Grail.

In A.D. 326 Constantine began the systematic destruction in Jerusalem of everything not Christian, and built impressive monuments and buildings on every supposed Christian site -- they stood for 300 years, until 614 when the Persians captured Jerusalem. In 630 the Emperor Heraclius

recaptured it, but in 648 it fell to the Muslims, who were next succeeded by the khalifs of Baghdad -- and in 1009, the Khalif Hakim destroyed everything non-Muslim. In 1099, Jerusalem was first occupied by the Crusaders.

So, after all that, if there was a relic of the last supper that somebody saved, could its existence have been kept a total secret for some twelve hundred years, and its condition have been unaffected by the area's repeated devastation for the entire period, and then have been found by some Crusader but only rumored and not publically exhibited even then? Yes it's possible - but very unlikely.

If the Grail stories were not based on fact, what could have been their purpose? Mythologists and psychologists suggest an answer -- that the Grail stories are myths that bring us great truth which they teach by allegories. But the allegories are focused on masculinity, and are only fully understood with some knowledge of masculine psychology, including the male and female nature of men - though, of course, the stories are not just for men, since a woman participates in her own inner masculinity, and has to cope somehow with the male - as father, husband or son. We must take everything in the myth as a part of ourselves - even the dazzling array of fair damsels, which must be seen as parts of the masculine psyche. Though these myths are couched in medieval terms and encased in the stuff of chivalry, the essence is no less present in the most modern of men. Moreover, like much of our religious heritage, it is a map or set of instructions for the deepest meaning of our interior life, not a set of laws for outer conduct.³

All the Grail stories involve the same symbols - such as the land is barren; the king is sick and injured; the wise fool arrives; he travels, wanders and meets challenges; the right question must be asked/answered; the grail must be found/recovered, but there are false grails and the seeker doesn't recognize it; there is a wounding and a healing; a "hideous damsel" appears; what is the grail's secret? The symbols tell us that there is a dark side to one's self and that the transition from childhood to adulthood is fraught with problems; there may be an "early grail experience" and search for the ideal, but comprehension comes only from a lifetime of experience. There must be a reconciliation with parents, and particularly males with the father, as well as escape from the smothering mother. Wounded men are seen in job-burnout, and in frustration in marriage or work relationships. Moreover, the mythologists point out that stories of magical objects bestowing divine powers are older than Christianity - they are also to be found in pre-Christian tales from Wales and Ireland - of a magic cup or stone, the lapis exilis.^{4,9} Are we talking the medieval era only? - not at all; in the past five years our television producers have brought us a half-dozen modern stories which are thinly disguised "grail" stories.⁵

So, finally, we must ask, was there really no practical or physical connection in those medieval years for giving the name "grail," to these stories? - well, maybe there was. Current historical and iconographical research of the Shroud of Turin may be providing such a link. Historians now suggest

that Jesus' burial shroud may have been saved (instinctively?) on Easter morning, probably by Joseph of Arimathea who owned the tomb and who bought the shroud. The image of Jesus' body, bearing every mark of his passion, may have been darker and more clear then, say scientists, than it is today. Upon discovering this mystically marked cloth, as proof of the resurrection, it was quickly (perhaps the same week) sent to Edessa for safekeeping - for Edessa was a satrapy of Parthia, beyond the reach of Rome or the Sanhedrin -- yet it had a large Jewish population, for it was just 25 miles from the Harran of Abraham, and it later became a famous Christian center - Why? Church historian Eusebius (ca. A.D. 340) tells of the miraculous healing power of a "relic" in Edessa.

Now, Shroud of Turin researchers have suggested that the Shroud's decorative casket in the early years was itself "the Grail." And it may have been made before the Shroud left Judea, thus concealing all but "the Face" - which is the way it was known from A.D. 33 to 944, when it was taken to Constantinople and revealed to be a full burial shroud with full image on it.⁶ The "Grail" itself - the casket - was probably copied to hold the Shroud copies, which may often have been only copies of the exposed Face, and the casket may have been no deeper (thicker) than a heavy picture frame.

When the Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade besieged and sacked Constantinople in 1203-4, they brought back news of the full-length burial shroud of Jesus which bore his image and vivid marks of his passion. Moreover, from mid- and late-first century onward we have "faces of Jesus" that do match perfectly with the Shroud of Turin face. And later, Justinian I, in the mid-500s, did make this Jesus likeness available to a monastery church in the Sinai, and ultimately the same face was to be seen in churches of St. Petersburg (Russia), in Greece, Italy, and at Laon in far western France. (Also, this introduction of the Shroud face into religious art was responsible for a bearded image replacing the beardless Jesus portraits which were predominant in the work of artists up to that time.)

But why the name, Grail? A curious facet of many of those early-century faces of Jesus (which we now know ~~were~~ are precisely based on the Shroud/mandylion face), is that the face was surrounded by a decorative lattice or trellis-like border. Now, historians and iconographers suggest that this was a cloth-of-gold, decorative overlay (with an oval or circular hole in the center for the Face to show); the cloth of the overlay was typical and almost identical to the rich material and pattern used by robe-makers for the kings of Parthia in the first century. And finally, linguists have pointed out that the ancient French word, greil or greille, can be translated as "lattice," and is the source of the English word, grill, but might with some carelessness have been transliterated as grail.⁷

Of course, fairly, one must also speculate that if Joseph of Arimathea saved the Shroud on Easter morning, might he not have taken it with him as he fled Palestine, first to southern France and later to southwest England? Yes, it's possible, but most unlikely. The "relic" or "Face" of Edessa was famous throughout Christendom for 900 years - it

was seized by the Emperor's army in A.D. 944 and brought to Constantinople where it was found to be the Shroud - known in A.D. 33, and known today. And history as well as iconography, now coming to light and being interpreted, definitively validates this scenario from A.D. 530 to 1204. The Glastonbury/Joseph/Grail legends in England are much too late and with no connecting links for that scenario to be seriously considered.

And of course, the speculation that the true Grail is the decorative casket in which the shroud of Jesus was kept - at least from A.D. 33 to 944 - will remain only speculation or theory, unless it is miraculously found - say, in a Roman catacomb - and validated beyond question. However, that scenario only makes sense if the cloth we call the Shroud of Turin is really the Shroud of Jesus. Of course, science seems to say it is. The badly flawed carbon-dating exercise of 1988 has been repeatedly undermined since then by solid scientific evaluation and new data, plus strong reinforcement of validity by historical and iconographical data.

But for those of us who believe in psychical research, perhaps we should give more credence to existing validation from two psychic sources: First, from the extensive written reports of world-renowned mystics who repeatedly "saw" the crucifixion and its aftermath; and Second, from the current spate of wisdom communicators to modern "channelers"; both groups say that indeed this Shroud is the one that wrapped Jesus' broken body. Consciousness expanded to the ultimate!

But is all the Grail literature just the "joint" imagination of medieval novelists? - maybe not. When, in 1314, the Knights Templar crusader organization was abolished by the Pope, the king of France put its leaders on trial for heresy (though some historians say it really was political pique); the ecclesiastical court convicted and executed them, on testimony that they held secret ceremonies and worshipped a "bearded head," which they "venerated as God." In the last ten years Shroud researchers have suggested that either the Templars possessed the Shroud briefly in the 13th century or had access to it and made copies of the Face for their religious ceremonies.

Although Crusaders saw the full Shroud as it hung in the Constantinople cathedral, it is quite possible that after the fall of the city, the cloth, as a spoil of war, was kept folded in its casket with the grill-like covering during its missing years, 1204-1357 -- it was only this mystical, mysterious "Grail" (and its copies) that was known thereafter to the Crusaders and Templars.

Within the last five years, in the ceiling of a building in Templecombe, southern England, that once had been a Templar orientation center, was found a wooden board (apparently a lid) bearing the "Shroud face," as validated by the "polarized image overlay" technique used in the F.B.I. for portrait matching.⁸ So, one can speculate the possibility that the Templecombe panel was the lid of a shallow casket in which a folded copy of the Shroud was kept for ceremonial purposes - and the Templars may have had dozens of such copies to keep in their various centers -- so that, these caskets with the

"grill-like" border around the Face may have held copies of the original relic - the mystical Shroud with image. And from that ceremonial item, known in secret to thousands of Templars, may have come hints from which the Holy Grail stories were born.

But, though I may have clarified this murky subject, have I really solved anything? Perhaps not! -- for it still must remain a mystery as to how a dozen writers in a half-dozen countries over three centuries, with apparently limited or no awareness of the works of each other could anticipate modern psychology with allegories so profound, and seemingly so consistent with each other. Those writers seem to have been medieval precursors of today's psychologists! -- and yet were writing fantasy fiction in the extreme!

And now the channeled wisdom from spirit communicator "White Eagle" gives us a finale:

"The Holy Grail, the cup which holds the life-essence of Christ, is within the heart of every person. It is within your heart. As you aspire to the Christ spirit, so its size and receptivity increases and it becomes filled with power and light and the very wine of life which is poured forth again for the blessing of others. We pray that by aspiration, the Holy Grail of your heart may be filled with the divine spirit."

1. Dr. Norma Lorre Goodrich, author of the quartet, King Arthur, Guinevere, Merlin, The Holy Grail, has now established Arthur's historical bona-fides.
2. Only John mentions the "disciple Jesus loved" and many scholars now seem certain John bar Zebedee was not he, and was not the author of John. See Spiritual Frontiers, XII-1, p. 14; Gospel According to St. John, Vol. 3, by Schnackenburg; Community of the Beloved Disciple by R. E. Brown; The Priority of John by John A. T. Robinson; Secret Identity of the Beloved Disciple by J. A. Grassi.
3. Workshop, Ron Mangravite, "Tantra and Relationships," SFFI Midwest Retreat, 1993. Books by Robert A. Johnson (Harper & Row): HE: Understanding Masculine Psychology (1989); SHE: Understanding Female Psychology (1989); WE: Understanding the Psychology of Romantic Love (1983).
4. Workshop of Paul Hardt, "The Holy Grail," SFFI Midwest Retreat, 1993.
5. Field of Dreams; The Never Ending Story; The Fisher King; Hero With A Thousand Faces; Parsifal; Excalibur; Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.
6. See my book, PORTRAIT OF JESUS? - The Illustrated Story of the Shroud of Turin, 1983.
7. The Shroud and The Grail by Noel Currier-Briggs, 1987.
8. Dr. & Mrs. Alan Whanger of Durham, NC, have perfected the use of this technique in matching ancient "faces of Jesus" with the Shroud of Turin face.
9. Roger Sherman Loomis, in The Grail, from Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol, 1963, suggests that the lapis exilis ("a stone most pure") "is also called the Grail," and that Wolfram in his Parzival calls the Grail's guardians "Temple-isen," apparently thinking them to be an Order like the Knights Templar. Loomis also points out that the dominant

Grail stories were written between 1180 and 1230, which were very turbulent times governmentally, as well as times of artistic and intellectual ferment when the arts and the zest for knowledge attained its highest level in western Europe; thus, the Grail romances belong to a great experimental and creative epoch.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, with deep appreciation, is extended to those persons who assisted me in the research for this paper: REV. ALBERT R. DREISBACH, JR., director of the Atlanta International Center for Continuing Study and Exhibition of the Shroud of Turin.

DR. NORMA LORRE GOODRICH, author, historian, mythologist, and professor emeritus of Claremont Colleges, California.

PAUL HARDT, Adult Education faculty, Univ. of Minnesota.

RON MANGRAVITE, workshop leader at most SFFI events.

ISABEL PICZEK, artist, muralist, producer of more than 2,000 art works worldwide, and director of the Piczek Studio and Construction Art Center, Los Angeles.

DR. DANIEL C. SCAVONE, author, historian, Shroud researcher, and professor of history at Univ. of Southern Indiana.

FRANK C. TRIBBE, 6415 E. Donnagail Drive, Penn Laird, VA 22846-9722, was one of the founding trustees of the Academy, is honorary vice-president of Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship International, and for 18 years has been Editor of its quarterly journal, Spiritual Frontiers. A retired attorney, for more than fifty years has been a parapsychologist and psychical researcher. Author of Creative Meditation and reviser-editor of The Ashby Guidebook for Study of the Paranormal, he has written extensively in these fields, and lectures and leads workshops as well on spiritual subjects.

THE PLACE OF MEDIUMSHIP IN RELIGION AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH-
AND THE SPECIAL EVIDENCE OF ECTOPLASMIC SEANCES

Grace R. and John R. Crowley

ABSTRACT Mediumship and its relation to religion and psychical research will be illustrated by describing in detail four seances from a very large repertoire experienced by the authors. These are physical, or ectoplasmic, seances. Two involve direct voice and levitation; and two involve materialization. Physical or ectoplasmic seances, if properly understood, and their metaphysical laws comprehended, are the strongest proof of survival ever achieved. Gaining the living encounter with the Higher via mediumship has the effect of making religion really alive, and all religions very related. By abandoning the study of physical mediums years ago, parapsychology has exiled itself from the best way of proving survival, and now entertains practically no hope of gaining such proof by its science.

We are husband and wife and are writing this essay together, because it tells of experiences we have had together. Our contact with religion and the psychic has been complex. For example, we met at Union Theological Seminary, but there Grace graduated with the Master of Divinity, while John was in the Joint Program in Religion with Columbia University across the street, and not studying for the ministry but for a degree in the philosophy of religion. We shared a strong tendency to be dissatisfied with contemporary theology and the way it was taught even though those were the glamorous days of the famous Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. Contemporary theology was steeped in dilemmas, and had very few answers that appealed to us.

Earlier, John had been introduced to the School of Applied Philosophy, also in New York. It was an adult non-credit school designed to assist one to really live according to philosophic principles, and the philosophy taught was esoteric. The questions which Union and Columbia did not ask or could not answer were here both asked and answered.

The founder and director of the School of Applied Philosophy was May Benzenberg Mayer, who had studied with Dr. Carl Jung of Zurich, and became herself an expert in the dream, and its use in guiding students toward a fuller life, or individuation, as Jung called it. She differed from Jung however, in this respect. She had discovered that dreaming had a metaphysical dimension; that is, on occasion the dreamer is in touch not with earth-generated memories, but with metaphysical states and beings. Jung approached this view only late in his professional life, as we see from his last book, Memories, Dreams, Reflections.

Mrs. Mayer summarized the principles of esoteric philosophy in these five affirmations:

1. The continuity of individual life...the soul exists both before birth and after death, and is on a very long journey.
2. The slow or speedy advance of each soul according to its choice.
3. The responsibility of each individual for its own stature, as measured by Wisdom standards.
4. The reality of divine worlds.
5. The aid of Advanced Beings in the human evolution.

All of these affirmations can in time be realized through experience by the student as he or she advances. The first affirmation, the Continuity of Individual Life, however, can be demonstrated to students fairly early in their courses. The demonstration was via participating in a seance.

The School did not train mediums, regarding the medium's profession as more a specialty. Therefore, for these demonstration seances, a medium of proven ability was brought in from the outside twice a year.

We are presently going to tell you in some detail about what we call The Husafu Seance. It was the first one Grace attended, and as she describes it from her point of view and with her feelings as it unfolded, you will get a vivid impression of what it was like. I was present also, and it was for me my fourth experience.

Ideally, all members of a seance should be prepared with knowledge of the metaphysical laws which explain just how seance phenomena are possible. In a physical or ectoplasmic seance, and we will be describing a physical seance, it is possible for a beginner who is uninformed about metaphysics to be startled or shocked, and to end up rejecting the whole thing as simply unbelievable. Such a beginner, as many actually have, will end by saying "It was all a fake...all stage magic, like David Copperfield or The Amazing Randi or what we read about the Great Houdini."

What we are now going to tell you about, the Husafu seance, was an example of physical mediumship, which means that certain physical happenings occur; things are moved, voices come not from the medium, but from a trumpet. As we listen to Grace's account, we will see that although she was prepared with advance instruction in metaphysics, she was not only surprised, but shocked.

Grace is the daughter of a Congregational minister, a man of strong faith who believed totally in the afterlife but he did not go in for "that psychic stuff." Grace grew up equally ignorant about it, and her religious education in Wellesley's department of religion and Union Theological Seminary in New York City maintained that ignorance. But Grace had some deep thoughts and kept wondering, "Are there any answers?" Even as a little girl living in China, where her parents were stationed for five years, she wondered, "Have I lived before? Have I lived in China before?"

So this wonder, and wonder is the first step on the higher reaches of "the ladder of feelings," brought her, as it had John, to The School of Applied Philosophy.

Describing the Seance

As Grace took her seat in the Ecclesium, on my right - we were two of about twenty present - I could tell that she was afraid. Perhaps she was thinking, "What's going to happen? Can I take it?" And things were going to happen, which we shall try to tell you now.

Carthusier was a physical, or ectoplasmic, medium. That means that he would go into trance, and ectoplasm in considerable quantity would be drawn from his body by his "spirit controls." But let us leave that out for the time being and return to Grace's point of view. The large room was lighted and she could see it was bare of furniture except for the folding metal chairs arranged in an oval in the center of the room. At one end of the oval was an easy chair; that was for the medium. Our Director sat opposite him.

The lights were still on. Grace saw one of the men standing by an electric light bulb. He was rubbing the large end of an aluminum contraption against the lighted bulb. This didn't make much sense to her, but then she saw the man place the object - it was a collapsed aluminum trumpet - in the center of the oval, on the floor, next to a bowl of water with some flowers floating on the surface. This was interesting!

The lights went out and now Grace's attention was focused on the center because there she could see the only patch of light in the room. It came from the phosphorescent adhesive band which the man had taped around the larger end of the trumpet. The trumpet lay, collapsed, on its side next to the bowl of water. Its faint glow was enough to cause a reflected light in the polished floor around it. There was no other light.

After greeting everyone, the Director, Mrs. Mayer, introduced the medium, and opened with a prayer. She then explained what this was all about.

"This is strictly a proof seance. That means it has a definite purpose, which is to have one spirit visitor for each one of you who can thoroughly prove that he or she is real and exactly who they claim to be. This means that much of their talk will be about particulars, calling up shared memories, for example. There will be no philosophic teaching, because that would not prove identity. Do not seek to prolong your conversation with your visitor, because there are twenty of us, and each visit takes time."

She explained that Rev. Carthusier goes into trance rather slowly.

"While waiting, it will help if we sing songs and hymns. The energy of our singing - and that energy is not just sound - will have a benefit also, but I'll explain that

some other time. You are a special audience of sitters because you have all been prepared by your training. This should help us get good results."

It was Grace's first seance. What follows is told mainly from her point of view.

Grace: I was impressed by her talk but still, I confess, frightened.

We kept singing quite a while until Rev. Carthusier apparently slumped. We could hear it, but not see it. And his breathing changed, a sign that he was in trance. After a while, finally something happened. Snap...the trumpet snapped open! Then it began to scrape back and forth on the floor. Wow! What was making this happen?

Then the trumpet rose, tentatively, slowly to about five feet, then Crash! it fell to the floor. I gasped, and I don't think I was the only one who did. Soon the trumpet tried it again. This time it rose up to right under the ceiling, about fifteen feet up. Then it began to soar around up there like a bird. Then Crash! back on the floor. WHAT IS GOING ON?

Now the trumpet, which we can see at all times because of the illuminated band, positioned itself about five feet above the middle of the circle. There was quiet...then suddenly a voice sounded. "This is Reindeer." It was a gruff man's voice, possibly that of an American Indian. He told us he was ready to start, after greeting us all by name. (How could he do that?) Quiet. Then I felt some drops of water falling onto my hand. I turned toward Jack, and he had the same. (Later I learned this was a courteous greeting)

Now the trumpet lowered itself to the level of our heads, and started going around the circle, coming toward my right side. It paused in front of each person and bowed, tipping its open end toward each one. Again we were being greeted. This should be reassuring, but I am still afraid. If they can do all these things with a trumpet, what else could they do? The trumpet came toward me from my right, and suddenly it hit me right on the head! I yelped...I don't think I screamed, but I yelped very loud. Everyone laughed, except me.

Now Reindeer said, "I'm sorry, Grace, but we had to do that. You were so tense with fear that you were causing static, making it hard for us to do things and communicate. You understand?" I nodded, I guess.

Now Reindeer was succeeded as the control by another, quite different person. She had the personality of a kind of "Baby Snooks" - a young girl. Her name was Elsie. She was very efficient, a perfect mistress of ceremonies.

I am going to skip describing the nineteen other encounters of a spirit visitor proving his or her identity. They were all successful, but I shall just tell what happened to me.

The Husafu Story

The trumpet was now in front of me, and suddenly a loud man's voice addressed me, speaking Chinese. (I lived in China from age one to five and then could speak Chinese, but I had not kept it up.) I recognized the voice, and said, "Husafu!"

- Husafu: Yah, yah, Husafu." There followed a flow of words in Chinese.
- Grace: "Husafu, may I ask you to speak English? I have forgotten my Chinese."
- Husafu: (pause) "I was with you last night."
- Grace: "You were?" (I said this with fear in my voice, not liking the idea of a 'ghost' being around me, especially at night.)
- Husafu: "Yes, you were standing around the instrument with many strings."
- Grace: "You mean a harp?" I was awed. I guess I was thinking of harps in heaven.
- Jack: (Growing impatient with Grace's slowness to catch on) "No, he means a piano."
- Husafu: "Yes, piano, piano, piano." (This was correct because last night we went next door to visit a couple from the Juilliard School of Music, and we did stand around as the husband played the piano.)
- Husafu: "I have been to your parents' house, big white house with five columns. I saw a little old lady there, and your father's garden behind the house." That was my grandmother, and that was Dad's victory garden, still going although World War II had been over for three years.

Husafu was proving himself. I was beginning to relax and enjoy his company even though I could not see him. His voice was very real, loud and clear. Husafu was the head houseboy or butler of our house in Nanking, where we lived from 1922 until our hasty departure in 1927 during the "Incident of Nanking," when an unruly mob of irregular soldiers followed Chiang Kai Chek's army into the city and pillaged and murdered. We women and children were taken to the U.S. gunboat on the Yangtze River, but all the men had to stay behind. My father's life was saved actually by the intervention of Husafu, who dressed him in Chinese clothes. Thirteen missionaries, including the President of Nanking University, were killed in this incident.

This flashed through my mind as Husafu now said, in a more serious voice, "I received two letters from your father. I answered one but I could not answer the other because I and my family were killed by the Japanese."

- Grace: Incredible! This is the proof. Only a few months ago when I was on a short visit home, my father, out of the blue, started talking about Husafu. "You know, Grace," he said, "I wrote Husafu two letters; he answered the first, but not the second. We've never heard from him since. I wonder why."

Although Jack, who is more interested in the technical side of mediumship, was thoroughly convinced of the reality and identity of Husafu from the beginning, it took me to this point to accept.

My heart was flooded with happiness. Here, at last, I had some real knowledge. Life does go on after death, and it is normal.

Jack: Although the news of the second unanswered letter and Husafu's death were the central thing in this communication from spirit; all the other things he said also added to the proof of identity...Seeing us last night standing around the piano...his correct description of Grace's home, and the small old lady, whom Grace still called "Tiny grandma." This showed that this spirit was, in his terms, alive, and could observe and remember perfectly.

As for explaining the technique of the seance, a chapter, even a book could be written about that. I shall try to do what I can in the brief space permitted.

First of all, this seance was a physical seance. A physical seance differs from a performance by a mental medium, in this respect: physical, that is visible, audible, tangible things happen in the company of the medium. There are more than 25 varieties of physical mediumship; all we have time for is this one. This was a Direct Voice-Trumpet seance. Direct voice means that the voice comes, not from the medium's mouth, but from the various places in the room, quite separate from the medium. In the case of using the trumpet, the voice is mediated by a set of vocal cords shaped out of ectoplasm drawn from the body of the medium (and very possibly also from others present). Ectoplasm must be used to produce all of the many types of physical effects; ectoplasm by the way is used even for automatic writing, and even for the oui-ja board.

Secondly, ectoplasm is also shaped into instruments or rods and levers with which the medium's controls move the trumpet around. In this instance, we were treated to many movements by the trumpet, possibly for sheer entertainment and to warm us up gradually for what was to follow. Ectoplasm also was used to lift the water and drop drops on our hands.

The controls, Reindeer, and Elsie, activated the ectoplasmic vocal cords in the narrow end of the trumpet, to produce their audible speech as did each spirit visitor. The controls are also in charge of arranging the order and the time limits for the visitors from spirit.

I think I have covered the essentials. One of the reasons, and I believe the main reason, why parapsychology is so aloof from mediums is that in the years 1882-1927, when physical mediums were occasionally studied by psychical researchers, there was very little understanding of the metaphysical laws I have sketched above. As a result, the

startling phenomena, which were intended by spirit controls to really "wow" the audiences and convince them of the reality of spirit communicators beyond a doubt, instead, for many, produced rejection. There is a strange truth I learned quite late in life. Seeing is not believing. Think about that: seeing is not believing. They saw but they were not ready to believe what they saw.

An example of "seeing is not believing" is the research career of Dr. Charles Richet. He studied several physical mediums, often with a group of other professors. He observed, measured, weighed ectoplasm, and knew full well that it was essential to the physical phenomena which it made possible: lifting, moving, and materializing hands, faces, and occasionally whole human bodies. But he could not arrive at any explanation of why these things were happening, or really even how they were happening. That there were controls in spirit extracting and manipulating the ectoplasm - that that explained how, he could never accept, for he did not believe in the soul or its survival. As for why the phenomena happened, it of course could not occur to him that there was a very logical, common-sense explanation, i.e. that the people in spirit were doing this to show that they were there, alive in a different way, but alive, conscious, intelligent, and very eager to make contact. It was so simple, as simple as what a child would do if it were locked in a closet...it would scratch and kick and pound and yell to call attention to itself, and this is what the seance, all seances are about, in an increasingly refined way as the spirit people gained through practice more skill and refinement in building the bridge, oh that marvelous bridge!

Through the seance, and through other forms of making contact, spirit is telling us that there is a larger world, worlds within worlds. "Do not be so stuck in the mud of matter," they are saying. "Open your inner eyes and ears, spread your wings,...we want your company, we love you, we want to help you more than you permit us to do."

It is fortunate that although the dominant people in psychical research and parapsychology ruled mediums out of the picture, mediums themselves went on being mediums. We had not only the rich experiences with Rev. Carthusier at the School of Applied Philosophy in the late 1940's, but from 1970 to the present, we have had similar rich experiences, amounting to 500 or more, counting all types of mediumship.

In October, 1969, we joined a psychic development class in Rochester, New York, and quickly along with some 12 others, we awakened the psychic energies that blossomed as clairsentience, and clairvoyance, and clairsaudience. We dared to enter into spiritual healing and found it promising.

Into November, we developed the confidence to send prayer and absent healing to Grace's mother, Gertrude, who was in a Miami nursing home. We visited her during the Christmas vacation, taking three of our children. She was in the latter stages of Parkinson's disease, and at age 81

was totally paralyzed. She could not speak or move her hands but here eyes still sparkled and spoke volumes of love and good cheer, unbelievable as that seemed.

May 15, 1970, Gertrude died. We asked the teacher of our development class if it were likely that Grace's mother could "come through" a medium when we were at Silver Belle, a spiritualist camp in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, which we planned to attend on August 15th, just three months after her passing. She thought not, saying that being so aged and infirm, it would probably take quite a while for her to become sufficiently oriented and in command of herself to take the initiative to come through, which is not an easy thing to do.

We partially accepted this reasonable explanation, but still had hope, as we sat in the first seance of that weekend visit to Camp Silver Belle, on the afternoon of August 15th.

The Second and Third Seances.. "The Gertrude Story"

It was a "precipitation" seance involving us and our group and a few others, about 12 in all. The purpose of the seance was to see if spirit could bring through or precipitate writings on blank white cards, one of which each of us was given to hold. It would take time, and we were guided in our waiting and occasional singing by the medium, Rev. F. Reed Brown, and his spirit guide, Blue Bell, who was not visible, but clearly audible to us as she spoke in direct voice. The room was lighted by soft daylight coming through curtains over the window to our left. Some time after we had begun our waiting, holding the cards, Grace and I suddenly saw that one of the trumpets standing on their wide ends near the wall opposite us about eight feet away, was rising by itself. We then saw it turn toward us, and then heard a faint, rather hoarse voice say, "Robson." Grace instantly recognized that the voice was from her mother, using her married name as identification. Seconds later, the voice added, "Horace," Gertrude's husband's first name.

At this point, the unseen but quite audible presence of the guide Blue Bell spoke up. In a very firm voice, she said, "My dear lady, put that trumpet down. It is not yet your turn. Your turn will come tomorrow."

Wow! Gertrude must have regained her strength very rapidly! And of course, what she did, this daring and unconventional thing, was typical of her. At age 7, at a fair in England where she was living, she slipped away from her parents and went up in a balloon. Graduating from college, she became a lay missionary, going out alone, and spending five years in China, traveling way up the Yangtze almost to Tibet. Gertrude's wrist was too weak for her to hold a tennis racquet, but look at this other kind of strength she had!

Lest we forget the main event, the "precipitation" was thoroughly successful, each of us finding a verse of a psalm written in color on our cards, by a spirit hand.

The next day we attended our first materialization seance, given by the Rev. Warren Smith, president of Silver Belle, and at that time perhaps the premier materialization medium in the world.

A word about the technique of materialization. First of all, the medium must have an unusual ability to have his or her ectoplasm drawn out. Ectoplasm exists in everybody, but only a very few have it in such available quantity that it can be used to materialize a spirit, and keep it there in view for some time, and to do this many times during a seance. Warren Smith and his controls could do this. The seance room for materializations is lighted by a red light at the rear, allowing those present who are not sufficiently clairvoyant, to physically see the spirits in their materialized form.

There were about twenty of us present at this seance, half of them our friends. When it came our turn, we were led forward toward the cabinet together. Very briefly, my mother and two aunts, my teacher and Indian guide came through and spoke. Then to Grace came her grandfather and grandmother. Her grandmother, a spirited woman of small stature, called "Tiny Grandma," held out her hands and touched us and led us in a circle, a dance, which is what Grace remembered she always did with her and her two brothers, when they were children.

Finally, after a pause, there emerged from the cabinet, a most beautiful woman, in beautiful clothes. Some in the audience gasped, and whispered "How beautiful she is!"

It was Gertrude, but not the Gertrude of three months earlier, totally paralyzed and 81 years old, but Gertrude in the prime of life, a young matron of perhaps thirty, just as she looked in photographs of her in China at that time. She came close and said some things. Then she stepped back, as if to allow everyone a total view, and said, "See, I have lost my impediments."

How characteristic of Gertrude, the scholar, and English, to use that highbrow word, "impediments"...that which impedes...baggage. This reminds us of the Greek saying, "Soma - sema," which means "The body is the tomb"...the grave of the spirit, the baggage which weighs down and impedes the flaming spirit within.

This transformation of Gertrude's appearance from 81 and paralyzed to the beautiful matron of thirty...how could it have happened? Tradition says that if the person arriving in spirit wants to and knows or learns how, he or she will be able to transform themselves at will. Are we not reminded of what the mystical English poet, Edmund Spenser, wrote: "The soule is forme, and doth the bodie make." That means that the power and initiative to produce the body in the first place, and to shape and remake it, resides in the soul.

William James was the Harvard professor of philosophy considered to be both the father of philosophic pragmatism, and the father of American psychology. He was also a pioneer in psychical research. In this interest he may have been influenced by his father, who was a noted Swedenborgian.

Charles Richet was a "man of parts," not only a Nobel Prize-winner, bacteriologist and pathologist, but also a poet, novelist, and playwright. He was also for many years a persistent researcher into mediumship, which work he summed up in his Thirty Years of Psychical Research, 1923.

We had the privilege of meeting and conversing with these two gentlemen, in another Warren Smith materialization seance occurring the same weekend as the two previously described. The earlier part of this long seance was the customary coming through of relatives and guides of the some 15 people present. Then the room, rather brightly lighted by the red light, was cleared, and Smith's guide, Miss Firefly, stepped forward and said, "Now we are going to have something special."

She withdrew, and then there appeared in the part of the room to our right and somewhat back, a very distinguished looking gentleman.

He said, "I am William James. I am here to tell you about a special assignment that I have been chosen to carry out. We are attempting to try a new way to help those dying suddenly in an accident make the transition smoothly and to orient them to their new condition. We have been given the assignment to deal with the sudden death of forty American students, who, accompanied by their professors, have just recently died in a plane crash over the Andes Mountains while returning from a South American field trip.

"Usually, these dying suddenly are met and escorted individually by some close relative or special guide. The idea we have been given is that we should take advantage of the fact that these people, both at their school and on this long and interesting field trip, have forged a real bond, which one might call a soul bond. We are to see if keeping them together works better to smooth the passage than the customary way; actually, I can report that so far it seems to be working indeed very well...

"Now, would you like to meet one of the students who, as you call it, 'died' in the plane crash, and has been a part of the experiment?"

Naturally we said yes, and now a young man materialized and stood to Dr. James' left. We talked with him and were struck by his total normality; there was no evidence of trauma of heart, or mind caused by his sudden "great fall" and death. And no trauma to his body either, as his materialized "body of survival" was unblemished.

In connection with "sudden death by air," it is interesting to note that Air Chief Marshall Lord Hugh Dowding, head of the R.A.F. Fighter Command and victor in the Battle of Britain, was concerned about easing the transition for air pilots and crews. It was appearing to Dowding, through mediums, that many of these pilots, dying with shocking suddenness, were totally disoriented and bewildered, not knowing where they were, or whether they were alive or dead. To compensate for this, Lord Dowding had the facts about death and dying communicated to the pilots while they were alive. Tradition has it that this was also done in the British navy.

The young crash survivor, or non-survivor, had withdrawn, and now Dr. James said, "I want to introduce you to an old friend of mine, Dr. Charles Richet. We both served as presidents of the Society of Psychical Research and got to know and like each other very well."

As he was speaking, Richet materialized forward and to our left. James then withdrew. When the word "Richet" was pronounced, we gasped...the famous Richet! Richet smiled. He was good-humored and modest. He said "I guess I know what you want me to talk about..." We said, with one voice, "Ectoplasm!"

He said, "Well, it's better to demonstrate it than to talk about it, but I'll need a volunteer!" I considered being brave enough to step forward, but before I could decide, a young man to my right stepped forward as the volunteer.

The young man stood facing us and Richet took his place to his left. Richet now proceeded to draw a steady, slow flow of ectoplasm from the solar plexus of the volunteer, chatting lightheartedly as he did. The ectoplasm was white and filmy but also dense. Richet was very nonchalant and the volunteer was taking it very well. Richet told a few jokes as the wispy beginnings became a veritable outpouring and the exuded ectoplasm, now as thick and wide as a white bath towel, very slowly settled to the floor.

Then Richet looked at us in mock consternation and asked, "What are we going to do with all this stuff? Tsk, tsk, let's see if there is any way to get it back." Now he teased the material upward and sure enough, what had been unreeled gradually returned. When at last no ectoplasm showed outside the volunteer, Dr. Richet told him he could return to his seat, and added, "After the seance is over I want you to have a glass or two of water and lie down for a while, and then you will be perfectly all right."

Those of our readers who have read Richet, will remember that he never accepted the spirit hypothesis; never believed there was a soul or an after life, but he did study mediums for years, and particularly physical mediums. It is he who invented the term "ectoplasm" for this substance which is always found when physical mediumship occurs.

Richet was appearing to us thirty-five years after his death. How long had it taken him to accept the after life

as real? No mention was made of this, and anyway, on the other side, time does not matter, nor do the firmest convictions built up in the earth life necessarily last very long.

Part II Some Implications of our Seance Experiences.

Describing in detail four seances as we have done would have been redundant for an audience of Academy members, if the original intention of the SFF had continued. That original intention was to celebrate genuine evidence of survival, the true meaning of prayer, and spiritual healing to the Churches. From the start in 1956, this intention continued strong until shortly after the death of Arthur Ford in 1971. Then for a number of reasons, doubt crept in, and before long the approach to these things became problematical and tentative.

Coming, as we did, from a very secure first-hand knowledge of mediumship, and of the metaphysical laws which govern it, although members of SFFI since 1969, we had no such doubts. Where then have the doubts come from? To answer this, one must examine the history of psychical research and of parapsychology, which succeeded it around 1930. The stimulus to the research, starting formally in 1882 with the SPR, was the fact of mediums, and particularly physical mediums such as D.D. Home and Florence King, both studied approvingly by the physicist, Sir William Crookes. But over the years it became difficult to find consensus that physical mediumship was not fraudulent. I tend to believe that this may largely have been due to two things: one was general ignorance of the metaphysical laws which made physical phenomena possible; the other was a natural tendency to disbelieve what one cannot explain. This disbelieving also led to the invention of ingenious other explanations, such as the hocus pocus of stage magicians. Harry Houdini himself, by doing this put the kibosh on the stunning physical phenomena of the medium Mina (Margery) Crandon around 1925. Many scientists and psychical researchers participated in the Crandon series; Arthur Conan Doyle believed that it was the negative coloration given by the master magician Houdini which turned the tables against the acceptance of Crandon. Among those deciding against her and against physical mediumship generally were Professor McGiffert and his protege, J.B. Rhine.

McGiffert left Harvard to become head of psychology at Duke and took Rhine with him, installing him shortly as the head of a new approach to psychical research, avoiding mediums, studying ordinary people, and people doing easily controlled things like clairvoyance, telepathy and later psychokinesis. This was the birth of what succeeded psychical research, namely parapsychology.

In a speech to the SFF in 1973, republished by the SFFI in 1986, Rhine said he reduces the main religious questions to two: 1) is there evidence for PMS (post mortem survival) and 2) is there evidence for DA (Divine Agencies)? Rhine said that both are so far not proved because both depend on human mediation; and what the medium or prophet is mediating and from what source cannot be proved, because in the last

analysis the message may come just from the mind, conscious or unconscious, of the medium herself, or himself. For these reasons, Rhine gave up examining mediums early in his career. (Rhine 1986, p.49)

This judgment is echoed by parapsychologists by and large today, and it is reported that at the 100th anniversary of psychical research and parapsychology held at Cambridge University in 1982, only 1 per cent of those present were interested in seeing if survival could be proved by parapsychology. (Berger c.1)

So we see, that the severely weakened confidence in mediumship of the SFII, was in no way compensated by turning to parapsychology for support. Actually, it would seem that part of the trouble has been sheer lack of experience. The early SFF leaders confined their experience to Ford, who was a mental and not a physical medium. When he died, and when also his reputation came under question, there was apparently no one they knew to turn to.

* * *

As for the values personally derived from our very extensive study of mediumship, we think that, in general, any action which supports one's awareness of The Larger, of the worlds of soul and spirit, is good. Certainly, one's confidence in the value of prayer is increased. Also, the sure knowing that those people of history one is drawn to, the poets and composers, the philosophers and saints, --- are there. Frequently, when our group devoted to esoteric philosophy, meditation, and healing, are studying a certain figure, that person has come to join us, showing himself or herself through our trance mediums and by transfiguration. Then there are our own guides and guardians, now real to us.

The knowledge of mediumship also promotes an understanding of the history of religions. We now realize that religion did not begin, as some Roman intellectual put it, "Timor fecit deos" (fear created the gods), but began with clairvoyance. The gods, first perhaps the tribe's ancestors, were actually seen. Now the whole history of religion opens up, and religion becomes alive.

Conclusion

We hope that this essay and these narratives of seances will be of value, and perhaps encourage some to read some of the other...less negative commentators on mediumship. To help in this we have included a careful selection of truly expert scholars of mediumship, and have indicated by an asterisk those particularly informative on physical mediumship. And don't forget, the man who really got the SFF started was Sherwood Eddy. He was a man of firm faith but still determined to back this up with proof. He spent fourteen years in psychical research ending with total conviction particularly derived from the remarkable physical medium doing all those things...direct voice, materialization, and apports...His name, Dr. MacBeth, and Eddy's book describing all this is You Will Survive After Death, 1950.

Grace and John Crowley live at 395 Oakdale Drive, Rochester, New York 14618. They are both Trustees of the Academy. Grace was graduated from Wellesley College, Union Theological Seminary with the M.Div., and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School with the D.Min. She has been a United Church of Christ interim minister, and is a lecturer and writer, mother of four, and was for thirteen years a psychiatric social worker.

John was graduated from Princeton, and from the Joint Program in Religion of Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University with the degrees of M.A. and M. Phil. He is an emeritus associate professor of English, and received Spiritualist ordination in 1986. He lectures, does supply preaching, and writes. Grace and John have been conducting groups devoted to esoteric philosophy, meditation, and healing for over twenty years.

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THE DYNAMICS OF GRIEF AND THE IMPLICATIONS
FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

Louis Richard Batzler

Grief is that difficult and painful constellation of thoughts and feelings that one experiences through separation, loss or traumatic change. Most often grieving persons who need special help will seek it through therapists, religion, support groups, and medications, all of which can be helpful. Few recognize or utilize psi experiences for healing the distresses of grief. This study shows that psi can and often does occur before, during and after the mourning process, and thereby can be an important dynamic in the resolution of grief. This fact has important implications for psychical research.

INTRODUCTION

A basic factor in the understanding of grief is that all relationships eventually end in separation. The nature of the relationship largely determines the nature of the grief. The loss of a casual acquaintance, where there is some mutuality and risk, usually does not elicit the intensity of grief that the loss of a good friend does. With the loss of a friend, the benevolent forces of trust, responsibility, openness and sharing are lost and these losses can shatter one's inner security system. When the loss is that of a deeply loved one, where there has been intimacy, risk, vulnerability, trust, sharing and mutual delight in one another's presence, then grief is usually extreme. Here separation is serration. No one fully recovers from the loss of a significant loved one. The mature adult is really a mourning person. We part at many levels and when this happens, a rich process of grieving is set off.

From shortly after birth until a person dies, grief is a significant part of one's life. There are many reasons for grief, and grief has many manifestations, ramifications, intensities, and durations. The increased awareness and understanding of the complexity and significance of grief have resulted in much responsible and valuable research and therapy for the prevention and healing of grief-related distresses.

Basically, grief is that difficult and painful constellation of thoughts and feelings that one experiences through separation, loss or significant change. Grief is a universal experience and, as such, it is important to realize that grief is not a sign of weakness, nor lack of faith, but a human need. Grief is an expression of love that is honorable, cathartic and therapeutic. Grief teaches. Through grief one can see priorities and perspectives more clearly and experience deep feelings more intensely. This seeing and feeling are

helpful for growth toward wholeness. Grief can also establish and strengthen relationships which become supportive and help to fill the vacuum of loneliness. It is important, therefore, to begin grief work as soon as possible. Postponed, suspended or unresolved grief can be detrimental to your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. The loss of a loved one is not easy. It is even more difficult when one does not deal with the loss. If one does not deal with the loss, one runs the risk of losing oneself.

NORMAL EXPRESSIONS OF GRIEF

Grief, or the mourning process, is expressed in many ways.

Physiological. All of the physical body systems are affected in mourning--respiratory, circulatory, digestive, reproductive, nervous and muscle. Specifically, these effects include breathlessness, deep and frequent sighing, tight chest and throat, heart palpitations and/or irregular rhythm, changed blood pressure, loss of appetite, weakness, fatigue, sensitivity to noise, insomnia, sexual dysfunction, pain.

Cognitive. Mental awareness and sensitivity undergo many changes such as confusion, disbelief, preoccupation, sense of deceased's presence, hallucinations, sense of unreality, absentmindedness, forgetfulness, idealization.

Emotional trauma, even in normal grieving, is often intense and varied--sadness, anger, blame, hostility toward others and self (suicidal feelings), guilt, anxiety (especially about one's own death and not being able to care for self), loneliness, helplessness, shock, yearning, relief, emancipation, fear, insecurity, pain.

Spiritual. Faith change (decrease or increase), blaming God, new goals and priorities, recommitment to religious institution, reaching out to others, new expressions of compassion.

Other behaviors may include sleep disturbances, dreams (often of deceased), imitating traits of deceased, avoiding reminders, searching and calling out, overactivity, crying, visiting places or carrying objects that remind, treasuring objects.

Social withdrawal, lack of warmth, forced social interaction to counteract anger, involvement in helping others.

ABNORMAL EXPRESSIONS OF GRIEF

The different terms used to describe abnormal grief attest to the complex nature of the experience. These terms include chronic, delayed, inhibited, suppressed, postponed, exaggerated, masked, repressed.

Chronic grief is continuous, prolonged grief that does not have a satisfactory conclusion.

Delayed (inhibited, suppressed, postponed) grief is that which becomes excessive and oppressive at a later time. The loss is carried over and the delayed response is magnified, e.g., overreaction at seeing a sad film or losing an article, etc. Also, there is the tendency to reactivate grieving for earlier losses or to activate pain for the first time from a previous loss.

Exaggerated grief is frequently due to guilt from ambivalent relationships with the deceased and is characterized by severe depression, hopelessness and various excessive fears (thanatophobia).

Masked or repressed grief will manifest in symptoms of physical illness, pain and unusual behavior, but these symptoms are not seen as related to the loss.

Abnormal grief has many expressions, some of which are similar to normal grief. Where there is a similarity, the abnormal expression is usually more intense, of longer duration, and is found in combination with other specifically abnormal manifestations. The following include the major expressions and behaviors of those who are mourning abnormally and usually need special attention.

1. Persistent anxiety, especially about one's own death and further losses through illness, desertion, rejection, death
2. Mummification, which is the desire to preserve everything the same as before death. The opposite reaction is the immediate disposal of everything belonging to the deceased.
3. Strong hope for reunion which reflects in a death wish.
4. Suicide or suicide threats are frequent behaviors identified with abnormal grief.
5. Aggressive and destructive outbursts.
6. Overactivity without a sense of loss.
7. Compulsive caring for others which usually accompanies a feeling of self-reliance.
8. Constellation of emotions such as despair, long depression, anger, resentment, worthlessness and need to be punished.
9. Taking on symptoms of the illness of deceased.
10. Physical diseases in any of the body systems.
11. Hypochondria.
12. Persistent guilt and blame of self.
13. Hostility to specific persons, e.g., physician, nurse.
14. Masking hostility, which leads to rigid, unnatural behavior sometimes resembling schizophrenia.
15. Euphoria.
16. Inappropriate expressions of humor and laughter or frequent and intense weeping.
17. Depersonalization of self and others.
18. Radical changes in life style reflected in loss of patterns of social interaction.
19. Extreme alterations in relationship to friends and relative
20. Acts detrimental to social-economic existence such as giving everything away or susceptibility to "con" artists.
21. Lack of decision-making or initiative.
22. Mislocation of deceased's presence in an object, animal, another person.
23. Mislocation of deceased within oneself by overly identifying with deceased.
24. Being accident-prone.
25. Keeping the dead body in the house a number of days before notifying anyone of the death.
26. Denying the meaning and significance of the loss by regarding it as a minor event.
27. Selective forgetting.
28. Denying death as irreversible.
29. Passion for seances to contact the deceased in some way.
30. Frequent mention of other losses in conversations.
31. Extreme sadness on anniversaries and holidays.

32. Not having or not participating in funeral, memorial service or providing a grave site.
33. Repetitive dreams, especially involving the deceased.

THE MOURNING PROCESS

Usually, in normal grief, the mourner moves through stages or phases that can be fairly well defined. To be aware of these stages can be helpful in determining support measures.

Numbing. This stage is characterized by blunting of feelings, a sense of unreality, a dream-like or trance-like state. At the same time there may be intense outbursts of anger and extreme sensitivity to normal stimuli. Near the end of this stage, acceptance of the reality of the loss occurs. Duration ranges from hours to weeks.

Yearning and searching. This is one of the most difficult periods and may last for months or years. Restlessness, intensive thinking, paying attention to stimuli that suggest the presence of the deceased, attention to the environment which the deceased frequented, calling out for the person, anger, ingratitude, images and fantasies constitute the dynamics of this stage.

Disorganization and despair. This stage is closely related to the previous one and is often difficult to differentiate. Loneliness, depression, various anxieties, a sense of helplessness and isolation frequently manifest. Support groups and individuals are especially valuable. Duration may be months or years.

Reorganization and renewal. Bereaved begins to gain stability by viewing the loss in the perspective of her/his past, present and future. Financial, legal, material matters are taken care of, work or activities bring new hope and energy. New relationships are formed or old ones renewed, ego integrity is restored. Movement is toward normalization. This period also may extend for many months or years.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE MOURNING PROCESS

To understand why people mourn the way they do helps in knowing how to cope with their grief. The following determinative factors in grief are usually the most common and significant.

1. Identity and role of the person lost and the nature of the relationship between the deceased and the bereaved. This includes the nature of the attachment, dependence, security, image, ambivalence. If there is ambivalence, in which there is love and hate, anger and sympathy, the mourning process may be "paralyzed". If the bereaved feels narcissistic and sees the deceased as representing an extension of her/himself, denial may be expressed. If the bereaved is overly dependent, desperation and unreality may prevail.
2. Causes and circumstances of the loss. Accidental death, suicide, homicide are very traumatic and difficult to work through. Tragic and sudden death often prevent the mourning process from beginning. The same may happen with multiple losses or if the loss is uncertain, e.g., missing in action. Prolonged nursing of the patient produces mixed emotions; distortion or mutilation is tragic. How

information reaches the bereaved, the nature of the relationship just before death; and who is responsible for the death if this can be determined; all influence the mourning process.

3. Historical antecedents, especially the manner in which the mourner coped with previous losses. Childhood losses, often unresolved, are important factors in this regard.
4. Personality of the bereaved. The capacity for love, forming new relationships, responding to stress and one's self-concept or self-image can influence mourning.
5. Social and psychological circumstances affect the bereaved at the time of and after the loss. Such factors include one's financial situation, living alone, friends, faith, support groups. In addition, certain social factors may even prevent mourning. For example, the loss is socially unspeakable (suicide); the loss is socially negated, i.e., treating it as if it never happened (abortion).

THE PSI FACTOR IN DEATH, DYING AND GRIEF

One of the major concerns of human beings is that of death dying and life after death. The reason is obvious. The universality, finality and mystery of death and beyond affects our lives in so many ways. Death threatens our identity, influences values and goals, restricts choices, limits control, disrupts plans and qualifies relationships. Death confronts us with our very selfhood.

All fields of human endeavor in some way relate to and are influenced by our mortality. Thus, it is not surprising that much investigation and research by parapsychologists has been devoted to this subject, especially when we recognize that paranormal phenomena are involved in dying, death and life after death. The number of publications, research studies, psi anecdotes, speeches and investigations is overwhelming and the quest for understanding continues unabated.

The many ways that psi researchers investigate the matter of life after death exemplify the effort and interest in the subject. Researchers are giving special attention to the out-of-body experience (OBE) which is a relatively common experience and one that can be tested and monitored reasonably well. If there is a non-material component of man, which, during life, can leave the body and maintain itself for periods in an exteriorized state or location while exercising hearing, seeing, memory, awareness, and thought processes -- then, theoretically, that non-material component may be able to survive death.

There are numerous types of subjective OBE's.

1. Traumatic separation.
 - a. Anticipating an accident
 - b. In an accident
 - c. In childbirth
 - d. During surgery, intense pain, coma, under anesthesia
 - e. Result of shock
2. Voluntary separation.
3. Dreamtime separation (especially in "lucid" dreams where one is aware of her/his dreaming).
4. Near-death or severe illness separation.
5. Clinical death separation.
6. Spirit-induced separation.

7. During hypnotic or psychic trance.
 8. Bilocation, when unaware of the extended existence.
 9. Bilocation, when aware of activity in both existences.
 10. An observed OBE double.
 11. OBE doubles in the seance room.
 12. Piggy-back OBE, where the traveler is unaware that he is a "tour conductor".
 13. The "fully operational" OBE which is seen, touched, converses, eats, drinks, moves objects, writes.
 14. At the moment of death.
 15. The "Doppelganger" or "reverse OBE" (where consciousness stays in the body but recognizes its double "out there")
- The more objective OBE's include:
1. Auditory response, which includes involuntary and voluntary types, where the traveler "hears" something specific, unique, and verifiable while at the remote location.
 2. Pre-planned "perspective" cases in which an optical image device in another room is used whereby the target image is purposely distorted at a viewing lens. The subject "travels," views the target through the lens and also without the lens, and reports the two different images.
 3. Pre-planned "fly-in" cases where travelers are able to correctly identify staged items at remote locations.
 4. Observed apparitions of the living which are verified at both ends by witnesses.

Other evidences for spirit survival of bodily death include the following:

1. Drop-in Communicator. This involves the appearance of an entity where there is no recognition or relationship between the entity and the medium or any of the sitters. The entity is not invited to communicate.
2. Apparitions of the Recent Dead. These have appeared throughout history and numerous cases are recorded in the annals of psychical research.
3. Audible Voice. Subject hears the deceased person's voice.
4. Reports from the Recent Dead. The deceased communicates in some way with the living, sometimes offering important information.
5. Cross Correspondence. A complex mediumistic approach in which fragmentary utterances from different mediums, which have no point or meaning in themselves, but which when pieced together, give a coherent message.
6. Claimed Memories of Former Incarnations. Reincarnation is based on the belief in survival of physical death.
7. Possession. Throughout history, possession by spirits of the deceased has been claimed, although not proven.
8. Survival Codes. Persons develop a code for use in writing an encoded message to be communicated by the writer after her/his death. A variation of this is some special action which each agrees on which is to be effected after one dies.
9. Automatic Writing. Subject writes message automatically with information from someone on the other side.
10. Spirit-recorded Voices. This is the electronic voice phenomenon in which voices of the deceased are heard and recorded on tape.
11. Spirit Photography. Pictures of deceased appear on normal film usually alongside the images of the live person/s who was/were photographed.

12. Materialization. This is the appearance of deceased in some ectoplasmic form.
13. Handwriting Verification. An apparition produces writing that a graphoanalyst can verify against pre-death writing samples.
14. Photomultiplier Potential. Living tissue emits light, usually ultraviolet, but sometimes visible. When some organisms are damaged or destroyed, light emission increases, possibly indicating new life energies.
15. Experiments at the Moment of Death.
 - a. Photography. Photographing corpses at intervals to see the emergence and development of mist-like form. Psychics often claim to see this.
 - b. Weight Loss at Moment of Death. Slight weight loss might suggest the departure of some aspect of self.
16. Deathbed Visions. There are many reports of the dying person experiencing the presence of loved ones who pre-deceased him, religious figures, scenes, and sounds from another world.
17. Apparitions at Moment of Death. At the very moment of death, person experiences the presence of someone who has died or someone who is still living, but not physically present with the dying person at the last moment.
18. Musical Moments. Beautiful music is sometimes heard and keys on instruments are seen to move without a performer being visible. Deathbed music also is often heard by dying persons.
19. Clinical death experiences provide some of the more popular views of life after death. Reports from persons who pass into a temporary state of clinical death marked by absence of heartbeat, respiration, and other vital signs reveal similar experiences regardless of race, culture, background, religion, or social standing. Common elements in these experiences include:
 - a. Ineffability, in which the experience is beyond description.
 - b. Noise (buzzing, vibrating, whining) and movement (drifting, floating) through a tunnel, funnel, well, cave, or cylinder, usually with a light at the end.
 - c. Finding oneself outside the physical body (OBE).
 - d. Meeting predeceased friends and relatives or spiritual guides who sometimes inform the person he must return to life.
 - e. Panoramic review of life events, not in a linear, temporal sequence, but actions, thoughts, and consequences happen simultaneously.
 - f. Not afraid to go through the experience again.
 - g. Immersion in light with a feeling of warmth, love, and acceptance.
 - h. Encountering a "presence," a "being of light" who is loving and challenging with such questions as, "What are you doing with your life?"
 - i. Feelings of ease, peace, well-being and not wanting to return. Hardly any reports of "hell-like" experiences.
 - j. ~~Experiencing~~ transcendent realms of indescribable beauty and music.
 - k. Gaining insights about what is on the other side of death.

1. Acquiring positive attitudes toward life; not being afraid to die and a new focus on what is here rather than fearing death.

PSI AND GRIEF

Dying, death and grief go hand in hand. Psi activity and psi research dealing with dying, death and life after death directly or indirectly deal with grief. At a time when death loss and grief are so much in our every day experience and thus in our consciousness -- e.g., natural disasters, accidents, wars, terrorism, starvation, homicide, suicide -- it behooves us to examine what part psi can play in helping us cope with death and grief.

No one can know the number of persons who have been helped through their grief by way of psi experiences. Most likely the number is relatively small in comparison to other ways that persons cope, such as personal faith, religious beliefs, support groups and individuals, psychotherapy, psychiatry, and medication.

However, for those who have some knowledge, interest and experience in the paranormal, the percentage of those who are helped by psi is higher. In fact, for many persons, psi has been the primary factor, not only for moving through their grief but also for providing new, positive and creative changes in their lives. (Ring 1984).

The focus on the significance of psi for grief resolution is not to deny or belittle the value and validity of other approaches and techniques. However, it is a fact that a psi experience has helped numerous persons in their grief, either with or without other modalities. This fact needs to be recognized and utilized more often by all of those who are professionally or non-professionally involved in working with those who mourn.

The following case histories illustrate ways in which psi has been a major healing factor in various kinds and situations of grief.

"My 23 year old brother was in a hospital critically ill with cancer and died in three weeks. My mother had been with him day and night. ... One night after my brother had dozed off, she looked up and saw her 15 year old son come into the room in a wheelchair with his head bandaged. He was smiling and said, 'Don't worry, mom, Danny will be all right.' He stayed at Danny's bedside for a few seconds, then mom closed and reopened her eyes and he was gone. My 15 year old brother had been killed in a car accident seven years earlier! This was a small comfort to mom to know Danny wouldn't be alone after death."

This is a case in which anticipatory grief was diminished. Anticipatory grief is that which occurs prior to actual death or loss. This grief is usually experienced by the dying person and significant others. Psi can be particularly helpful in this type of grief. Numerous instances from many sources indicate that in the living/dying interval the appearance of the deceased and/or words of assurance and comfort from recently or long-deceased loved ones alleviated fear of death and separation anxiety, diminished or eliminated physical

pain for the dying and loved ones. (Osis 1977; Kelsey 1982; Chaplin 1977; Myers 1975; Matson 1977; Ring 1984).

There are cases that indicate grief in various forms and intensities is perpetuated, delayed, masked or repressed due to the "hold" or control that the deceased has on the bereaved (Crookall 1969; Chaplin 1977).

In such instances, grief is sometimes dissolved through insights gained from dreams, clairvoyance, OOBs, mediumship, guided imagery and other psi activity. I have witnessed such healing in the work of Ambrose and Olga Worrall, Arthur Ford and in my own counseling ministry.

A recent case involved a client, a psychotherapist, who for a year was deeply troubled and unable to carry on her practice. The client had been raised by her grandmother who had greatly controlled her life. The grandmother had died a year ago. During a guided imagery session that I conducted, the grandmother spoke to the client and indicated to her that she was free. The client wept (something she had not done since her grandmother's death), experienced an immediate feeling of relief and release and then stated that now she would be able to resume her normal life. In this case, it seems quite probable that her grandmother had still exerted a controlling influence from the other side, and for whatever reason, finally relinquished that control.

Dreams often figure in the resolution of grief. One mother, whose young daughter died, dreamed of her each night walking with other children in a circle, all holding lighted candles. Her daughter's candle, however, was not lit and when the mother, in the dream, asked her daughter why her candle was not lit, the girl said that it was because the mother's tears had put it out. After this insight, the dreams ceased and the mother's grief was assuaged.

Another case involving a dying parishioner of a congregation I was serving, during her denial stage (which is one expression of anticipatory grief), dreamed of a kindly robed figure who walked past her, but she could not see his face. Months later, after accepting her dying, she had the same dream but this time saw the face of the figure. It was that of Chris. This is a case where, through dreams, anticipatory grief was diminished.

The simultaneous appearance of the deceased in an apparition may occur and help the bereaved one. One such case involved a husband who was killed and his body was lost in the mountains. Two days later he appeared at the bedside of his wife and to his doctor the same night. When the wife and doctor related their experience, both had a sense of wonder and relief.

Many persons in mourning have insomnia. A parishioner suffered insomnia after her mother died. One sleepless night, her mother appeared at the foot of her daughter's bed, remained silently for a brief time and disappeared. The parishioner then fell into a deep sleep and had no more insomnia.

The specific content of what is communicated is helpful in healing grief. The son of a friend of mine was killed in a plane crash during World War II and communicated through Arthur Ford that he was helping others, who died suddenly, to make the transition to the next world. The son's contact with his father, coupled with the information that he was helping others, alleviated much of the parents' grief.

Psi often appears in tragic and crisis situations and helps persons through their grief. The following was reported to me in a seminar I conducted on death.

"[I] had a car wreck and my 3-year old son died. While drifted in and out of wakefulness, I felt my son visited me in the arms of Jesus and said, 'Mommy, please don't worry. I am home and safe; please try to get better to go home and take care of my big brothers and sisters.' Then the vision disappeared. Since then my other children feel that their little brother is always with them."

This sense of a presence noted here is found in numerous situations and often the communication from the deceased indicates that there is a closeness greater than during earthly life. (Crookall 1969, 43).

I shall conclude this section with examples of friends and colleagues who demonstrate the significance of psi in grief.

Ambrose and Olga Worrall, reliable, responsible and recognized psychics and healers, for many years together shared their gifts with persons all over the world. After Ambrose's death, Olga was uncertain about continuing her work without Ambrose. During her period of grief and uncertainty, Ambrose appeared to her, encouraging and directing her in some essential tasks she was to perform. His on-going appearances and communication with her from spirit enabled her to move through her grief and indecision and continue the important work that both were doing.

Paul L. Higgins, a member of the Academy's Board and one of the founders of Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, has written and spoken extensively about the afterlife. His personal and professional experiences and his association with some of the outstanding persons in the field of the paranormal are numerous. Over the years his pastoral ministry has focused on the significance of life after death, the communion of saints and communion from the other side. His wife Ruth, shared much with Paul in this aspect of his ministry.

Several years ago Paul had a disabling stroke and shortly after, Ruth suddenly died. Within a few months Paul's life had changed drastically and his grief was intense. However, undaunted in spirit, he kept the faith, continued to minister and moved through his grief. This, he affirms, he has been able to do, in part, through the encouragement and information from Ruth who continues to assist him from the other side.

Frank Tribbe, psi researcher, author and one of the most important persons in the life and work of the Academy and Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, is professionally well-versed in the field of life after death. Through the deaths of two wives, Frank has personally experienced the grief of loss and the importance of the paranormal in helping him in his grief. He has written about some of these experiences in personal letters and articles in the Spiritual Frontiers Journal.

Charles Wise, another Academy Board member, has also experienced communication from beyond this realm from various sources, including that from his son. Charles has indicated ways in which the information has comforted, inspired and enlightened him and others.

These cases represent only a small sample of the different ways that psi has helped persons in their grief. Numerous other examples are described in many of the books noted in the bibliography.

Dying, death and life after death have been major concerns of psychical researchers, investigators and practitioners for many years. The survival hypothesis has been tested in numerous evidential cases and reinforced by experimental research. These concerns have seldom been recognized, introduced or utilized in clinical practice regarding grief. In two previous papers presented to the Academy, I indicated the need for a paradigm that involved a more experience-centered approach to parapsychology and one that seeks the effective utilization of psi ability and psi phenomena in practical situations. The accumulation of these exceptional human experiences is not a working out of probabilities. All of the research and opinion concerning psi cannot alter the certainty of those who have experienced psi and benefited from that experience. Human experience, which often contradicts theory, is a great test of truth. What persons affirm from their own experiences is worth listening to. There is a need for all who are involved in the psi enterprise to consider the functional significance of psi abilities and experiences and how psi can serve human needs.

This paper continues to affirm that need and to encourage those working in the fields of parapsychology and the healing arts to recognize and utilize the potentialities and possibilities that psi offers for wholeness and meaning. In this study I have shown how psi has specifically and effectively helped in healing grief and enriching life. Thus, I see important implications for parapsychologists, especially those involved in death research and study. Psi can be just as important for professionals specializing in grief therapy, hospice personnel, various survivor support groups, nurses, physicians and clergy.

I offer the following recommendations for more recognition, acceptance and utilization of psi in grief therapy.

1. Psi research and study that center on dying, death and life after death might well (or should) include information as to how psi can be utilized in healing grief and other ills.
2. Parapsychologists and non-professionals take the initiative to introduce data and information concerning the paranormal to the health care community through writing, speeches, media and personal testimonies.
3. Educators involved in health and healing seriously consider including studies of psi in colleges, graduate schools and seminaries.
4. Efforts be made to inform and encourage religious leaders, theologians and pastors to explore the value and use of psi in the life of faith. There is a close correspondence between information communicated from the other side and the recorded experiences of mystics, especially concerning the oneness of all life and oneness with God. This awareness can do much to reinforce the ministry of counseling, teaching and preaching.
5. Network with other organizations specifically dealing with dying, death and grief, e.g., Foundation of Thanatology, Grief Education Institute, National Hospice Organization, International Association for Near-Death Studies, Center for Death Education and Research, and the Hemlock Society.
6. Parapsychologists might well devote more of their efforts toward determining the factors and techniques that

can facilitate and unlock psi power in individuals. Thus, the should be looking for those capable of effective deployment of psi ability in practical situations.

CONCLUSION

Although the focus of this study is the importance of psi in grief therapy, parapsychology has important implications for other areas of human life.

Persons seeking spiritual truth through advances in psi are finding support for some of their beliefs that dogma and doctrine have often condemned. Revelation is taking on new meaning and scripture is being made more clear. The life of prayer and meditation is becoming more dynamic as persons become aware of and sensitive to energy patterns and subtle relationships between themselves and the universe. More inclusive concepts of God, creation, and salvation are facilitating a greater expansion of consciousness. Spiritual seekers who include psi in their quest consider psi more than mere phenomena. Evidence and experience affirm that spirit survives, that the spirit world is real, contiguous with this world and approachable. The world of spirit involves causation and efficiency, and persons can enter into meaningful relations with those in spirit. This belief means that involvement in psi is more than a rational, intellectual undertaking. It is a movement and commitment to the life of spirit which invites persons to recognize and use the powers of spirit, to go beyond knowing to doing.

Parapsychology is making a contribution to the new consciousness in science. This consciousness is manifested in a greater openness to new concepts of reality, unorthodox methodology, a willingness to consider new paradigms and frames of reference concerning natural law, more intuitive and transrational approaches to unsolved problems, more serious consideration of the fantastic, greater respect for once-rejected facts and absurdities, and a new appreciation of highest probability values.

Science and the technological revolution have not only increased our muscular capacities, but also the intensity and range of our senses. We now can examine the inside of a block of metal or a human body without disturbing or destroying them. We can view any desired point on earth and many points beyond earth without going there. We can see in dark places and hear the softest sounds at remote distances without using wires. Technology has enabled us to do more than extend our senses; technology has brought about a qualitative change in the senses and given them a new power of penetration. These advances have brought into being such terms as transhuman, psychozoic, post-civilization -- terms describing our state or soon-to-be state.

Parapsychology is taking us even farther by uncovering the beyond-sensory capacities of humans so that deeper levels of being, new modes of behavior, and greater understandings of reality are being revealed. These challenging changes bring us to new thresholds of freedom that pose new and greater responsibilities.

Parapsychology is helping us to see that virtually nothing is impossible or inevitable. This open-ended view of life means that if there is virtually no inevitability, then we are

called to greater responsibility. A mind open to all possibilities and a will resolved to act in accordance with the highest good might well be the keys that unlock the secrets of life for us all.

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Louis Richard Batzler, Ph.D. is president of the Academy Religion and Psychical Research, past president of Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, former president of Maryland Churches United and Koinonia Foundation. He is a parish minister and has been an educator in colleges, an holistic health center and a national counseling association. He is the author of four books and numerous articles dealing with spirituality, healing, parapsychology, normal and thanatology.

Address: 917 Colington Drive
Kill Devil Hills, NC, 27948
Phone: 919-441-4926

**THE TRANSPERSONAL EMERGENT EXPERIENCE:
IMPLICATIONS FOR AN EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS**

Joan M. Spencer, Ph.D.

These often misunderstood and unsupported events, experienced by a majority of Americans, are analyzed to reveal the essence and structure of the experience(s) as well as its impact(s) and helps and hindrances in the integrative process. Implications and significance of these events for the experient, significant others, and counselors (generic sense) are also presented. These transforming, life-altering, healing, nonpathological experiences can occur throughout the life-span and can encompass psychic, spiritual, and mystical components. The need to address the general inattentiveness to, and the tendency to pathologize, psychospiritual phenomena has led to a categorization and delineation of these experiences in the upcoming DSM-IV.

I. Introducing the Question

Eastern traditions have long had support systems, via oral and written guidelines, for spiritual emergent experiencers (Walsh & Vaughan, 1980). However, the American culture with its predominate Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm appears to present the spiritual emergent (awakening) experiencer with little support and/or guidelines. If this is a valid statement, and given that there are spiritual emergent experiences occurring to those living in the American culture, what are the parameters of this particular experience for these people and what are the parameters of support systems for the experiencers. Therefore, the research question is: What is the essence of the spiritual awakening experience in the American culture, its impact(s), helps and hindrances in the integrative process, suggestions for said experiencers, and comments for counselors (generic sense)?

Researchers such as Thomas and Cooper (1980) and Shafranske and Gorsuch (1984) note that although a majority of Americans report intense spiritual experiences, there is the high probability that many such experiences are unreported. Nevertheless, outside of a few bright spots in the literature, most research has either exhibited a general inattentiveness and/or a pathological perspective towards these experiences. Recent developments, concomitant with the growth of humanistic and transpersonal psychology and the study of Eastern traditions, emphatically draw attention to spiritual growth as a natural component of human growth and development (Grof & Grof, 1990).

II. Voices from the Literature Review

Those who have been concerned with these experiences are James (1958) who researched religious experiences, Maslow (1971) who explored healthy people and their experiences, and Jung (Campbell, 1971) who contributed theories of personal and collective unconscious. James also established guidelines for defining religious/mystical experiences: ineffability (experience is difficult to verbally express), noetic (intuited wisdom), transiency in relation to linear time, and lack of control while in the experience (1958). Jung (Campbell, 1971), who was similar to James in his interdisciplinary approach, gave birth to theories of individuation, various states of consciousness, and archetypes which are expressions of the collective unconscious and available to the individual through dreams and drawings.

Maslow, (Hoffman, 1988a), breaking from research tradition which said that the absence of disease was health, stated that the experience of being healthy needed to be studied to determine the parameters of healthy growth and development. These studies then led Maslow to explore peak, plateau, and transcendent experiences (1971, 1972). Maslow noted that the truly psychologically healthy individual were ones who not only reported plateau and transcendent experiences (altered states of consciousness) but who also expressed in their lives B-values (Being-values) such as truth, joy, honesty, and justice. This work gave impetus for a new definition of health; a definition which is still evolving.

Tart (1975), refining the research of altered states of consciousness (ASC's), noted that a discrete ASC (d-ASC) differed remarkably from the usual gradations of everyday conscious functioning. A d-ASC is such a drastic change in consciousness that the experient is fully aware that something is happening which is completely outside of the usual frame of reference and is not within ordinary ways of physiological and psychological functioning (Tart, 1975). The results impact the previous pattern of consciousness functioning to such an extent that, similar to undergoing a rite of passage, there is now a reorganization of awareness and functioning. Furthermore, there is the potential for healing on all levels of being since previously unconscious material becomes conscious (Grof and Grof, 1990).

Wilber (1977, 1980), the leading transpersonal theorist, developed a map of consciousness which exhibits a flow between states of consciousness as well as gradations within these states. There are seven major levels which include the psychic (no necessarily having a spiritual component), subtle (includes religious experiences), and transpersonal (includes spiritual and mystical experiences) realms. The flows and gradations influencing these levels give rise to seemingly unrelated and disparate types of experiences. White (1992) also noted that perhaps the wide variety of exceptional human experiences (EHE's) flow from a continuum of consciousness. However, a difference between White's research and others is the term 'exceptional'. The previously mentioned researchers

give no indication that these experiences are exceptional; rather, the sense is that such experiences are a part of normal healthy growth and development. This researcher suggests that perhaps these experiences are exceptional to the extent that this particular culture has negated or pathologized these experiences.

Grof (1985), who has a background as a Freudian psychiatrist and LSD researcher, has focused his attention on transpersonal psychology in general and spiritual emergency/emergent experiences in particular. This required addressing the confusion between spirituality and religion. Religious experiences are viewed as a group activity within a codified structure and spiritual experiences are seen as an individual experience that connects, or reconnects, one to a reality that is greater than, or beyond, one's usual state of consciousness (Grof, 1989). It is the spiritual realm where the Divine is not only met but is fully experienced and becomes an underlying pervasive framework for the person's life. Spiritual experiences are considered to be inclusive and may occur within a religious setting. It was Maslow who noted that those who are optimally healthy are those "who are deeply sensitive to spirituality and who can integrate it well into their lives" (Hoffman, 1988b, 5).

The literature review also revealed confusion in delineating the characteristics of spiritual crises and spiritual emergent (awakening) experiences. A crisis, by its very nature, has an inherent component which leads an individual to seek immediate relief. However, if an event is viewed as less than life-threatening, immediate assistance may not be requested. Emergencies are, therefore, noted to be sudden, jarring, experiences with the presence of disruptive energy patterns, overwhelming insights, and markedly lower emotional defenses. Daily routines will be disturbed as well as the comprehension of self and the environment in general. This is true of all crises and, therefore, of spiritual emergencies. The distinction between the emergency and non-emergency event is one of perception; perception by the experient and those individuals in the immediate environment surrounding the event.

In addition, Heery (1989) studied experiences of inner voices and concluded that these experiences were not indicative of pathological events. These voices gave guidance to the individuals and were perceived, and received, in a positive framework. Heery's work appears to be connected with the work of James (1958) regarding the intuited wisdom hallmark of a spiritual experience.

Furthermore, previous research by Spencer (1986) defines a psychic experience as one in which information is received in a non-sensory mode, is an ASC, and does not necessarily have a spiritual component. Therefore, since a spiritual experience contains the reception of information beyond the physical sensory pathways, the spiritual emergent experience might also be perceived as having parapsychological components.

In summary, the spiritual awakening experience is viewed as a healthy, nonpathological, ASC that is a life-transforming rite of passage with healing occurring on physiological, psychological, and spiritual levels. The experience is generally of short duration, contains perceptual distortions, and transcends time and space. It has progressive growth and development characteristics, the presence of intuited knowledge, a sense of spirituality, and very positive, organized, transformative visions. There is an awareness of the private nature of the experience as well as a sense of the connectedness with all. Voices, if present, are perceived as giving wise counsel. If there is a union with the Divine then the experience is considered to be a mystical event (Spencer, 1986).

The intense spiritual experienter typically is psychologically healthy, has some modicum of ego strength, is able to establish boundaries, and is functional in the pre- and post-episodic modes (Spencer, 1986). The history of the experient reveals a lack of memory impairment due to organic and inorganic etiology, functional relationships, and an ability to recognize the internal nature of the experience (Grof & Grof, 1990). In addition, if assistance is sought, the experienter will generally cooperate with the counselor if the counselor is familiar with these experiences (Grof & Grof, 1990).

Post-experience difficulties with integrating the spiritual emergent experience may include (1) difficulties in outwardly expressing the marked change of inner values and perspectives which has now taken place, (2) a need for immediate interpretation, and to continue the search, for understanding of the experience, (3) difficulties in relationship with self, others, and the Divine which has now been altered to such an extent that confusion and incongruity exists between the inner and outer environments, and (4) the lack of medical, psychological, religious/spiritual, and cultural supports (Grof & Grof, 1990; Bragdon, 1988; Grof & Grof, 1985a, 1985b).

The literature review also reveals that another difficulty may be the presence of the dark night of the soul. This is considered to be a type of death, or removal of, all internal and external individual support systems (Grof & Grof, 1990; Ram Dass, 1988; Giles, 1982; Underhill, 1961). These authors note that this event is an absence of all meaning, contains a time of being in limbo between the past and the future, and is more than being engulfed in one's shadows. "All we know is that every notion of well-being and security is being destroyed, and our total self...is being ravaged by doubt, despair and disillusion" (Giles, 1982, 54).

Maladaptive responses, often arising from lack of supports, can include ego-inflation and pride in having such an experience, substance abuse as an attempt to either negate the experience or to go towards another experience, and fear that the experience is a sign of mental illness (Grof & Grof, 1990; Ram Dass, 1988).

One major threat to successful integration of the experience is aborting the process via substance abuse and/or is aborting the process via substance abuse and/or medications such as tranquilizers Grof & Grof, 1990). Other impacts on the integrative process include (1) the lack of familiarity with these experiences by the American culture at large and by those in the helping professions such as priests/ministers, psychiatrists/psychologists, medical personnel, and (2) the prevalent notion that, reflecting the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm, that these experiences are signs of mental illness (Grof & Grof, 1990).

Nevertheless, recent research has begun to tackle not only the parameters of spiritual/mystical experiences but facilitation of the integrative and healing processes. Grof (1985), Bragdon (1988), and Taegel (1990) have developed techniques for assisting this process which include the use of guided imagery, nature-based techniques, and guidelines for those who will assist in the integrative process.

III. Methodology

It is the research question that determines the choice of methodology. Researchers such as Giorgi (1985), Patton (1980), and Moustakas (1989) agree that the arguments concerning the validity and appropriateness of qualitative methodologies are now replaced by a recognition that these methodologies are as rigorous and demanding, if not more so, as any quantitative methodology. Each methodology has its own merits, qualifications, and appropriateness for research usage.

Qualitative methodology, concerned with experiences, is divided into phenomenological and heuristic methods. The former maintains a distancing stance from the research while the latter includes the researcher's experience within the framework of study and reporting. Therefore, since this research question concerns a description of the experience of spiritual awakening and this researcher wished maintain a stance of not inserting a personal experience to into the research, a qualitative phenomenological method was chosen. Additional limitations chosen by this researcher included limiting the number of participants to no more than 12 and limiting the research question to the American culture. An open-discussion format was chosen to allow for increased freedom of discussion by both parties.

Participants were volunteers who responded to the research call put before several area organizations. All volunteers placed themselves in the category of having a spiritual awakening experience within the American culture. The result was 9 co-researchers (participants): 7 female, 2 male. The ages at the time of the experience ranged from 9 to 43 years and the ages at the time of the interviews ranged from 40 to 67 years. The actual interview time length ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours. Interviews were taped by audio cassette and then transcribed.

All co-researchers were given a packet of materials, prior to the interview, that included a welcoming letter, a Participation Release Agreement form, General Notes for Co-Researchers describing the research process and operating definitions, and an Interview Discussion List reflecting suggested areas to be covered during the interview. Furthermore, because of the confusion with defining and labelling experiences, the following research definition parameters were utilized:

religious experience: one which occurs in a group, codified set of beliefs as expressed in rituals and other actions; may or may not have spiritual components.

spiritual experience: a private experience which brings to the individual's awareness a realization and/or contact with-that-which-is-greater-than-self, often referred to as the Divine, Creator, or Atman.

mystical experience: a private experience during which duality ceases to exist; there is a merging or union with the Divine and there is no delineation of the sacred and secular--all is sacred.

transpersonal: often used as a synonym for the term spiritual; however, transpersonal is viewed as encompassing the spiritual, mystical, and religious realms.

spiritual emergency: connotes a crisis situation in which assistance is definitely sought.

spiritual emergence (awakening): an awakening to the Divine realms of existence; may or may not be a crisis.

In summary, 9 participants volunteered to be co-researchers and to describe their experience, with the assistance of a tape recorder, for detailed examination via qualitative phenomenological methodology. The result would reveal the essence and structure of the spiritual emergent (awakening) experience in the American culture, its effects, helps and hindrances in the integrative process, implications for other experiencers, and the significance for counselors (generic sense).

IV. Voices from the Phenomenological Interviews

The interviews revealed similarities and differences with the literature review. Pertaining to the age of occurrence, the respondents indicated that these experiences can occur throughout the life span and not just during adolescent and midlife as suggested by literature review. Furthermore, it is suggested that the major factor is a history of cumulative stress for the induction of a spiritual awakening experience--not age. However, an absence of such a history of stress does not preclude such an emergent experience. Immediate triggers of the participants included a history of dysfunctional/abusive relationships, death of a significant other, and emotionally charged transitional time frames. The literature review separates initiatory events and cumulative stress; this research reveals that these factors often work in combination.

Although there were a variety of settings for the spiritual emergent experience, there was one connecting thread which is the conduciveness of the setting to the formation of an ASC. Again, it is not the separateness of

the setting and the ASC, as the literature review suggests, but variables working in tandem to enhance the probability of the spiritually emergent experience. It is to be noted that both the respondents and the literature review agree that there is no control over when, where, and how a spiritually emergent experience will occur, if it does indeed occur.

The greatest contrast between the literature review and the participants' descriptions was in the area of experience characteristics. Although the literature review revealed emphasis on the hallmarks of spiritual/mystical experiences such as ineffability, noesis, and lack of control, the participants placed much greater emphasis on the gradation and variety of emotions, the presence of voices and messages, and the acquisition of intuited wisdom. In addition, the literature review descriptions for spiritual crises were also the same descriptions used by the participants to describe their non-emergency experiences, revealing a need for further research into the existence of gradations of these experiences.

Since the major impact of this experience is the shift from viewing the Divine as an abstraction to now experiencing the Divine, the operational definition of a spiritually emergent experience had to be revised to read as follows: the experience is one in which the individual experiences the Divine for the first time. This experiencing of the Divine impacted all areas of the participants' lives. They placed great emphasis on this shifting and stressed that what may at first be perceived as a negative effect eventually, in the integrative process, would be seen as a positive result. These effects, reflecting the shift to experiencing the Divine and shifts in values, might result in changes in relationships, jobs, geographical location, choice of reading material, religious membership, and/or leisure activities. In hindsight, the participants considered their experience to be one of healthy growth and development even though their immediate post-experience reaction might have been one of "I'm going crazy".

Hindering the post-experience integrative process was the paucity of guidelines and support systems. Therefore, the participants made few, if any, attempts to share their experiences and/or to seek assistance in the processing. When assistance was sought, mostly within the religious context, participants report not only feeling negated and unsupported but some were told that these experiences might be of the Devil. The literature review revealed only hints of possible lack of support from the religious community yet for all of the participants it was this same lack of support, real or perceived, that led to major changes in their relationship with the religious community.

On the other hand, all participants reported quietly seeking help and understanding through reading materials, conferences, and other group activities which would be

conducive to meeting other experients. All participants reported learning to share their experiences very judiciously with many telling this researcher that these interviews afforded them an opportunity to be truly heard for the first time.

In contrast to the literature review, the participants gave greater emphasis to the postexperience effects of increased cognitive functioning and the importance of welcoming additional, similar experiences. Furthermore, the participants indicated that maladaptive responses are, in their opinion, definitely a minor factor, and are not the same as integrative difficulties. There is a sense that if the participants could have found counselors who were supportive and well-versed in these experiences, the post-integrative process might have been eased.

The importance of trusting, nurturing, and following one's inner wisdom in all areas of life was agreed upon by all participants. Emphasis was placed on the need to utilize time, space, and energy in order to nurture this relationship. The results of growing in relationship with this inner wisdom are an increased reliance on autonomy and inner authority and decreased reliance on the perception of others.

The literature review disclosed a concern that one of the postexperience difficulties might be the presence of the dark night of the soul. In marked contrast to the literature review, all of the participants alluded to similar states prior to the experience and none reported a postexperience dark night of the soul.

VI. Summary

A. The Experience

The spiritual emergent experience in the American culture can occur throughout the life span and usually occurs with a combination of a history of cumulative stress and in a setting which is conducive to the development of an ASC. Although the preparation for this type of experience may be established, there is no control over when, where, or if the experience will occur.

The experience is an unbidden, ASC, rite of passage, healing, internally experienced, transformative, radical life-altering event which can be jarring and overwhelming but not a crisis situation. The major scenario centers around life/death or birth and is often described as cleansing, healing, freeing, and the death of the pre-experience self.

Once the experience has begun, the individual does not encounter any desire for control of the event. Linear time may be suspended and/or perception of time may be distorted with the linear time of the event ranging from a few moments to 24-48 hours. Body and spatial perceptual distortions may be present.

Within the experience, emotions range in intensity from mild to overwhelming and may include joy, love,

anger, and peace. If fear is present, it is quickly dissipated.

Intuitied knowledge/wisdom is acquired and encompasses reassurance, validation, support, and growth-enhancing perceptions. Voices, often identifiable, are communicated with and the messages received are often reassuring and giving guidance pertaining to many aspect's of the individual's life. There is an unequivocal 'knowing' that the spiritual realm is not only a reality but that the Divine is now experienced within the self, connects the individual to all, and can be affiliated with via a relationship framework. There is no longer any boundary between the secular and sacred, spiritual and nonspiritual, the sacred and the ordinary. Thus, there is a new, or altered, sense of reality and of being in the world.

The experience remains so vivid and fresh throughout life that there is no problem recalling any details. However, descriptive difficulties are often present necessitating the use of analogous statements. There is a sense that one can never fully grasp the 'all' of the experience.

The impact of the experience is so massive as to include all aspects of life and to be a life-long integrative process. Underlying values and perspectives are radically altered and these, in turn, permeate every facet of life including changes in relationship to self, others, and the Divine. A major shift occurs in the relationship with organized religion, primarily due to the lack of receptivity of these experiences.

Material goals and the need for approval from others decreases; perceptual and cognitive functioning increases. There is increased acceptance of accountability and responsibility for their decisions as well as increased growth in expressing the inner values outwardly in their lives. In addition, there is now the beginning of a life-long search for greater understanding of the experience, a welcoming of similar experiences, and a search for other experiencers. Difficulties during the integrative process are viewed as growing pains.

If fears were present during the experience, they were quickly dissipated. However, fears of sanity, loneliness, the unknown, and death either disappeared as a result of the experience, were lessened by the integrative process, and/or were utilized in a positive manner: i.e., being very judicious in sharing the experience.

The lack of support systems is identified as the major hindrance in the integrative process. Nevertheless, no matter how the hindrances were viewed at the time of their occurrence, the participants eventually accepted them as learning experiences.

Participants also stated that helps in the integrative process included appropriate reading materials, networking with other experiencers and/or those who are familiar with

such experiences, and learning to access, nurture, and trust one's inner wisdom. This last help is emphasized as extremely important to the growth process and is likened to nurturing any other relationship.

B. Implications and Recommendations

Contrasting the literature review and the research results revealed many areas of pre-experience, experience, and post-experience parameters that have already been noted as needing further exploration. However, the exploration of the spiritual emergent experience as a vehicle for direct experiencing of the Divine carries within it the unspoken possibility of other avenues for a lived relationship with the Divine. In other words, although these participants experienced a sudden and unbidden spiritual experience what are other, perhaps smoother, transitions events in experiencing the Divine relationship?

Another implication is that this event is an experience of expanded consciousness. The individual moves from a consciousness identified with the self to one of identification with greater-than-self, the Divine. This movement also carries with it an expansion from exclusiveness or separateness of the individual to an inclusive state of connection to all life--not just human life. Furthermore, every aspect of the individual's life is now shaped by a shift to values such as truth, honesty, and justice. Therefore, since this expanded state of consciousness affects every aspect of life and since no individual lives in a vacuum, there are resultant rippling effects in the family, the community, and society at large.

The participants particularly noted the lack of support in their religious communities. Although not ascertained during the interviews, this researcher wonders if the participants noted this paucity of support due to their expectations of the religious community. Therefore, it is suggested that the religious community, in particular, become aware of these experiences. It is additionally noted that all experiencers now placed religious life as a subset of spiritual life.

Counselors not only need to be aware of such experiences but also how, and how not, to assist the experiencer. Counselors in the generic sense include therapists, ministers/priests, educators, and nurses. It is hoped that the counselor would also have a spiritual framework and exhibit nonjudgmental listening, validation of the experience as well as the experiencer, empathy, an ability to facilitate verbal and nonverbal communication, and will be able to trust the integrative process to do the leading. There should be a knowledge that these experiences are not pathological; that, on the contrary, they are a breakthrough rather than a breakdown.

One of the impacts of research in spiritual crises and emergent experiences is the inclusion of spiritual crises in the DMS-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV) published by the American Psychiatric Association. This will, hopefully, increase the counseling support systems

available for those having experiences of expanded states of consciousness, including spiritual emergent experiences.

Another implication of these experiences concerns the definition of the optimally healthy individual. Recently there has been an increased amount of research into the mind-body relationship. This researcher notes that, as a direct result of this study, a spiritual component needs to be added to this relationship thus revealing a mind-body-spiritual connection. This addition reflects the impact of the spiritual emergent experience on all aspects of the individual's life.

Prejudice, the cancer of our society, is the alienation of anything or anyone that is not understood or is perceived as being different. The nutritional deficit is the attitude that the absence of signs of disease is equated with the definition of health. This picture can be changed if the parameters of optimal health include the presence of such growth-enhancing experiences and, concomitantly, if these experiences are seen as they really are--a natural part of healthy growth and development.

Exploration of expanded states of consciousness, as exhibited by the sponsors of this conference, needs to be continued. A welcome mat put out by organizations such as Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship International and this Academy will encourage spiritual emergent experiencers to seek out additional support venues for their integrative process. Furthermore, such conferences increase the public awareness of such experiences and lend indirect support to research activities.

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Joan M. Spencer, R.N., Ph.D., has a private transpersonal psychotherapeutic practice. She lectures, continues her research into spiritual experiences, and conducts workshops on topics such as those contained within this paper as well as dreams, journal writing, and earth-based techniques of healing.

Address: 8 Drawbridge Dr., Albany, NY 12203.

EXCEPTIONAL HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND
THE MORE THAT WE ARE: EHES AND IDENTITY

Rhea A. White

William James's definition of the More is related to exceptional human experiences as conversion experiences. White attempts to show how the multitude of possible EHEs (over 80) are essentially moments of grace that can serve a vital role in the formation of a new identity, not only in the case of individual persons but for the human species. This new identity is life-affirming not only for the self but for other persons, other life-forms, and the Earth itself because it is connected to the More.

The "More That We Are" of my title comes from a passage in William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. In this passage James (1902) describes the essence of religious experience without resorting to the imagery of any specific religion. It is a secular definition of the religious impulse, but one that nevertheless captures the core of the experience. James proposes that at base all religious teachings have two aspects. The first he calls an "uneasiness" about our lives, a sense that as we naturally stand "there is *something wrong about us*" (p. 498). The second part is the solution, which is to be saved from our unease, or in some cases—disease, by connecting with our higher self. My interpretation of the first aspect would be that at base it is a feeling of incompleteness—a sense that we are missing something in our lives—that by rights they should be fuller, richer, more exciting, more meaningful, more connected.

James theorizes that what occurs in the second or salvation/solution stage is the person contacts a higher part of him- or herself and *identifies* with it. This happens when the person "*becomes conscious that this higher part is conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside*" (James, 1902, 499). Moreover, the person discovers that he or she can keep in touch with and enter into a relationship with this other, greater self, which is both inside and outside. For me, these lines sum up the promise of exceptional human experiences and their relevance to the problems of the world today, almost all of which have been created by our species. I think James points to a way out of the mess we have made of the earth and ourselves.

Instead of referring to a "higher part," which is hierarchical, I would like to use the phrase "more connected part." When we are in James's first stage of the mystical life, we feel incomplete because we feel unconnected to the depths and heights of ourselves, others, other life forms, the universe at large, and, beyond all

that is created yet informing it—the sacred. In such moments, in one way or another, we experience a sense of connection that is accompanied by awe, wonder, surprise, and delight. This is what makes such experiences "exceptional." Perhaps the biggest surprise is that there is a quality about these moments with which we cannot help but identify. It is as if a self we experienced as disconnected, small, and unimportant looked in the mirror and saw a radiant being looking back—one who is spontaneously connected to everyone and everything else, which means that automatically the bonds of selfishness, fear, anxiety, greed, envy, and a host of other negative emotions effortlessly fall away. Perhaps most surprising is that, as James points out, with this new self one can identify with what formerly was perceived as being *outside*. The sense of self is no longer centered on the "me" and is perceived more as a process than as a separate entity. One becomes centered in an interchange between inner and outer that involves one's fullest self and yet seems to be composed of everyone and everything else.

I would like to put the matter of human identity, and especially James's second stage, in a broader context. Identity is who we tell ourselves (and sometimes others) we *really* are. In my view, identity has two aspects: the general and the particular. The general aspect is our story or understanding of the nature of generic human being, or at least of human being in general in one's own particular culture. The specific aspect is our story or understanding of who we are as an individual human being. I think a major problem with Western civilization today is our impoverished view of human being in general, which in turn diminishes our sense of the worth of individuals, including ourselves. I heard on a recent radio broadcast that significantly more minors are committing violent crimes in New York City than ever before and that these young people have no conception of the value of, or reverence for, human life—not even their own.

Another criticism of the Western cultural story is that it does not honor exceptional human experiences. There are many books today on how to develop one's personality and even write one's autobiography, but few include instructions on how to incorporate one's EHEs into one's self concept and integrate them with one's life story. I think EHEs are the most important ingredient of our life stories and that what Western culture's story of identity requires is due attention to such experiences. There is growing recognition of the importance of story or narrative in creating identity, and much is made of the value of recognizing archetypal and mythological aspects of our our lives in order to increase personal meaning. But no significant mention is made of the role of EHEs, although occasionally they *are* touched upon. Keen and Valley-Fox (1989) have a chapter in which they ask people to record their EHEs (but they call them "weird experiences," which is what I call a "negative story line"), and they do not take the further step of showing people how to weave such experiences into their lives. Feinstein and Krippner (1988) move a step closer. Their subtitle reveals their aim, which is to use "ritual, dreams, and imagination to discover your inner story." None of their chapters is specifically concerned with any type of EHE other than dreams, but there are two pages on mystical or transcendent experiences, which promises a positive story line for EHEs. They briefly point to the transformative potential of such experiences, and they urge readers to incorporate them into their personal myth, or what I refer to as one's story.¹

Deena Metzger (1992), in *Writing for Your Life*, emphasizes developing the inner life by journal writing. The influence of one of my favorite scholars, anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff, is evident in the emphasis on the need to weave our own identities. According to Myerhoff: "A self is made, not given. It is a creative and active *process* [italics added] of attending a life that must be heard, shaped, seen, said aloud into the world, finally enacted and woven into the lives of others" (p. 247). Myerhoff points out that what we must do is search through the "treasures and debris of ordinary existence for the clear points of intensity that do not erode, do not separate us, that are most intensely our own, yet other people's too" (quoted in Metzger, p. 247). I think that is the best definition of the nature and value of exceptional human experience I have yet come across: "clear points of intensity" in the midst of our otherwise unexceptional lives that connect us not only to our own depths but to that of others.

The interest in what are called narrative and interpretive approaches is burgeoning at the scholarly level, in psychotherapy (Frank & Frank, 1991; Spence, 1982), psychology (Bruner, 1990; Freeman, 1993; Linde, 1993; McAdams, 1985; Rosewald & Ochberg, 1992; White, 1993), humanistic psychology (Polkinghorne, 1988), anthropology (Myerhoff, 1992), literature (DeConcini, 1990), religion (Baird, 1992), and sociology (Krieger, 1991). I also have heard persons in the so-called hard sciences speak of "the story" of the atom or a star or a gene. I dare say there is a story involving an EHE behind most scientific findings in every hard science, but rarely are they reported. When they are, as in the case of Kekule's dream of the benzene rings, they are repeated in many contexts, over many generations, suggesting that at some level we recognize the importance of these experiences, but I think this also minimizes them by giving the impression that they are rarities. If we would pay attention to the presence of EHEs, especially in the significant moments of our lives, we would recognize both their importance and their commonness. But our culture actively minimizes their role by providing mainly negative story lines about them. Some of these negative stories are that they are indications that the experiencer is weird, abnormal, mentally ill, the victim of a delusion, possessed by the devil, or making it all up. We must counter these negative characterizations of EHEs by presenting positive story lines for them.

First, in the new view that is emerging in the human and social sciences, "reality" is not seen as something outside us that we have to use our senses and rational faculties to recognize and interact with. One of the best popular presentations of this new viewpoint is Walter Anderson's (1990) *Reality Isn't What It Used to Be*. Instead, reality, including our own identity, is seen as largely constructed by ourselves and others against the backdrop of our particular circumstances, significant others, and our culture. Additionally, the reality we construct, that is, the story we tell, affects the persons we come in contact with, and to some extent, our culture at large. Moreover, we keep reweaving our own stories throughout our lives. And we don't simply add new elements as they occur over the years. New experiences can lead us to view past experience in new ways and thus to alter the story of our own identity and of what it means to be human. Bertram J. Cohler (1994), in a review of *Storied Lives: The Cultural Politics of*

Self-Understanding (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992, 137), notes that longitudinal studies indicate that people continue to revise their life stories across their entire course and that the past is significant primarily only in regard to how it contributes to their current "experience of personal integrity." I (White, 1992) have attempted to show how this works in an essay review of a book by Barbara DeConcini entitled *Narrative Remembering*.

Second, my studies of exceptional human experience reveal that many, if not all EHEs, are *transitional* experiences. They serve as a bridge between an old identity and a potentially new one, or in James's view, between Stage 1 and Stage 2. They also serve as a bridge between an isolated sense of identity and a new story in which, as priest/environmentalist Tom Berry (1988/1990) puts it, we actually experience what it means to be not simply an individual on the surface of this earth and in this universe but as an aspect of the earth and the universe, a unique aspect that has never been before and never will be again, for no other being could possibly have the same genetic composition and be placed in exactly the same social and cultural context with the same family members, friends, peers, and associates. Each one of us is the universe living the experiment of life, doing their best with whatever comes from within and without, that is, with one's unique genetic make-up and life circumstances. Just as the sperm seeks the egg, so each human seeks personal knowledge of his or her unity with all things, and once that unity is glimpsed, all of life is made new. That is the source of the reverence for all life, human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate: the undeniable sense of connection to the More that an EHE provides.

Hoffman (1992, 53) writes of a man who as a child experienced an "aura of aliveness" radiating from animals and plants that gave him the feeling of being "part of a great Whole." These EHEs taught him "that each of us has a silent voice that speaks with God," but, he adds, we must not cut ourselves off from it but let it happen. Hoffman also includes an account of a woman who, while observing ants when she was a child, suddenly lost all sense of her ordinary self and became "fully merged with the ants' aliveness and purpose" (p. 55). She says that experience formed the basis of her conception of God and led her to her primary interests, landscape painting and poetry. It is very important to tell our stories fully, to others, not just ourselves. Nor should we leave any EHE out, for they serve as the portals to this more connected worldview, which is not so much a concept or idea as it is a noetic experience, an experience of knowing, and even beyond that, of *being*.

Third, how do we weave our EHEs into our lives? First, we must educate ourselves as to the full range of EHEs available to us, which includes not only psychic and mystical experiences, but over 80 types, many at the upper end of what we think of as "normal" experience, such as creativity, empathy, dreaming, and being "in the zone" in sports. Second, we must remember what EHEs we have had, and this may take a period of time to recall. We must work with them by becoming aware of the ways in which they have influenced our lives, or could have, if we had allowed them to. Because of the negative story lines our culture emphasizes, they may have influenced us negatively so that we may have feared incorporating them at all, or we may even have suppressed or repressed them—

kept them secret not only from others but from ourselves. Some EHEs are socially acceptable and as such are much less threatening than others. We should start small, with those experiences we feel safe in incorporating, such as moments of creative insight, feelings of nostalgia, memorable dreams, the wonder of certain synchronistic experiences that hint of a larger meaning and provide a glimpse of a greater connectedness than our everyday self is usually aware of, and moments of *deja vu* that loosen our sense of time.

If we cannot recall small EHEs, we must start with hints and guesses, which often can be found in poetry and other forms of literature, and in drama, art, music, and sports. If we feel hints and guesses are too far removed from reality to be relied upon, then we must study and empathize with the exceptional experiences of others. There are many recent collections available, such as the compilations of Cohen and Phipps (1979/1992), Hardy (1979), Hoffman (1992), Inglis (1989), and Laski (1961/1989). We need to dwell on these experiences and how they speak to *our* current lives. We should play with each one, telling ourselves: "If such and such is true, then....," and we must let our imaginations play with that "then," for it will lead us to a new story of human nature and thus, of our own selves. Ideally, it will also lead us to develop new positive story lines for our lives and our EHEs, which in turn should influence people close to us and even our culture, at first locally, and then in increasingly wider circles, replacing the old negative stereotypes that are stultifying the spiritual growth of our species. We must replace every single negative story line with a positive one. In fact, this is what is involved in successful psychotherapy: the therapist helps the client to reweave past negative experiences into a constructive view of themselves and their lives (Frank & Frank, 1991).

Although I am suggesting that these story lines are vehicles for incorporating EHEs into our life stories and into our story of what human being at large is, I want to emphasize the central importance of the EHEs themselves. In a sense, each one comes with its own potential story line—one uniquely fitted to ourselves and our circumstances. It may help to try on some of the positive story lines others have developed, but it is better to become aware of one's own story as it unfolds and have the courage to live from it. And courage will be required, what Tillich (1952) called "the courage to be," because when we have an EHE we are on the growing edge of ourselves, teetering between the old and the new. EHEs initiate a process in which we have to let go of the old and set foot on new ground, take up the new identity and walk. But whatever that new ground may be, and it probably differs for every person, it is the ground of ourselves. We need not fear it, even if it wounds us. The ultimate message seems to be, as my own most important EHE taught, "the everlasting arms are always there." We can afford to fall, because we will be caught. We can even afford to die, for, as my NDE also taught, "nothing that has ever lived can possibly die."

I met a woman recently who was in an abusive marriage from which she felt she could not extricate herself because her husband was a violent man who threatened to kill her if she left. She did not doubt that he would. Then she was involved in an automobile accident in which she had an NDE, which left her with the certain knowledge that death is an impossibility. She immediately incorporated

this into the story of her life and of human nature. The first thing she did when she returned home was tell her husband she was leaving. She was even able to laugh at his threats, because of her experience of the ultimate nonreality of death. Now you can certainly interpret this story in different ways, several being what I have called negative story lines. You could say the teaching of her NDE was a delusion engineered by various physiological secretions that occur in a life-threatening situation. I say it doesn't matter what engineered the experience. It is the knowledge she gained that counts. You could say the basis of that knowledge was illusory, yet because she was able to believe it, it altered her attitude, and her new attitude of fearlessness was sensed by her husband, whose violence was depotentiated by it. I say it doesn't matter how you rationally try to explain it. Here we have an actual life situation. The reality is that the NDE enabled this woman to change her story, and when she did, she was able to change her life.

When an EHE occurs, we have a strong impulse to explain it away—to expose it as unreal. But we are confronted by the reality of a changed life, regardless of the origin of the EHE. The origin doesn't matter! Trying to track it down is a major means of evading the meaning of an EHE. What counts is what it can lead to if one honors it. Nor does the story stop with the experience. In this woman's case, as a result of her near-death experience, she developed an inner sense of guidance, which she has since followed. She is now pioneering a technique for helping others to revise their identities and live more fully from the More in themselves and in the universe by a method given her by her "guides." In this way she, in turn, has become a guide for others.

I submit that there is nothing that we, as we near the 21st century, need more than this: that we come to see ourselves and our human beinghood as ultimately united with that which surpasses human understanding. But although at this stage it may be beyond the grasp of our rational faculties, it is not beyond the human heart. The knowledge of EHEs is not the rational knowledge our society privileges. It is a secret knowledge of the feelings, which it is important to share. In order to bring out the More in others, in order to increase our own awareness of the More in ourselves, we need to develop our awareness of the More, guided by our EHEs, and we need to share every insight that we gain. So only can we hope to reach that point where the More is simply that which is, interconnecting everything, both without and within.

At base, we must transform our philosophy, ethics, economics, science, and our educational, religious, and social institutions so that they recognize that exceptional experience must come first. Most importantly, we must foster every EHE reported by children. Instead of waiting for them to grow up and have a midlife crisis and rebirth, we should allow children to develop their EHEs as the spearhead of their lives, preferably under the guidance of authentic spiritual counselors who can provide positive story lines for such experiences. Children are naturally aware of the More in human experience. We should encourage them to build on it and continue to remain in touch with it throughout their lives—we must not let them forget from whence they came. A friend of a friend told her this story: When she had a new baby, her three-year old daughter begged to be left alone with the infant. The parents were hesitant to do so and asked her why, but she wouldn't

give any reason. Nonetheless, she continued to plead. Finally they let her do it, but kept the baby monitor on. They heard her say to her baby sister: "Please, tell me about God. I'm beginning to forget." Instead of teaching children to forget, we must use every means at our disposal to enable them to remember.

I think as infants, if not as children, most humans are in touch with the divine. As the consensus world begins to close in on us and close us off, we begin to forget. We are even *taught* to forget. Edward Hoffman (1992) has published recollections of adults concerning the exceptional experiences of their childhood. In many cases, parents, teachers, and friends denied the truth of their experiences in one way or another. For example, he (pp. 75-77) includes an account of a vivid NDE experienced by a 15-year-old girl when she was operated on for a ruptured appendix. She eagerly described her wondrous experience to her family and friends, but they all dismissed it as a dream induced by ether. She finally stopped telling people about it but remained convinced that it was not like any dream she had ever had and had actually been an encounter with death.

Hoffman also presents an account by an anthropologist who, at age four, stood on a beach and suddenly felt a door had opened and she "*became* the sun, the wind, and the sea. There was no 'I' any more" (p. 39). (Actually—there was an I, only it was not her ordinary I—it had become the More.) Her parents found her thus entranced and assumed she had had a heat stroke and put her to bed in a dark room for two days, which in fact did restore her ordinary sense of self. Nonetheless, she never forgot the experience even though as a child she did not know how to handle it nor could she speak of it, for fear that she would be thought crazy. She writes that 67 years later, what she experienced that day has "continued to carry me. It reminds me that I will always be in the middle of the stream as long as I keep the memory alive" (p. 39). This is the great clue—the necessity of keeping alive and nurturing the memories of our EHEs. Everything else can be relinquished, but if our lives are to have a sense of flow, of adaptability and growth, we have to remain in that current with which an EHE puts us in touch.

In this girl's case, the parents supplied the negative story line. As we become adults, we learn how to do it for ourselves! Cohen and Phipps (1979/1992, 3-4) cite a case in which a man was enraptured in St. Peter's Cathedral, but it had no effect upon his life even though he felt immortal, and had—as he puts it—an "orgasm of experience" (p. 4). But throughout he says his brain made cool observations as a BBC commentator would, dubbing the experience aesthetic, not religious, and as an illusion. Here we have the intrusion of negative story lines. When he reentered his body he says his brain took over, not without sympathy, as if he were a child who had lost his parents.

They cite another man who had a mystical experience in a church, his whole being radiated by ecstasy. This state lasted for several months, but ultimately, he did not change his life. He felt called, but he was conflicted. He felt that to follow the call he would have to give up his worldly ways. He was so deeply embedded in Stage 1 identity that he was unable to go on to Stage 2. But in other cases, children or young people are so profoundly affected by an experience that it serves as a touchstone for their entire lives. When he was a 16-year-old

South African schoolboy, Martin Israel listened to Weber's *Oberon* while in a depressed state. All of a sudden his perception altered. The room was irradiated by light and he felt he had entered eternity—that is, some space entirely outside of creation. Great spiritual insights came to him, as if an inner form of integral knowing had awakened. He writes (Cohen & Phipps, 1979/1992, 156) that his personality was altered—he no longer felt he was a separate self. Although he had lost his sense of individual identity, he said "for the first time in my life I had really experienced the identity of a whole person—I was in union with all creation and my identity had been added to it." His experience lasted three minutes, and it influenced the course of his entire life. Because of his new sense of connected identity, he became an Anglican priest and a healer, bringing to others in time and space what he had known in eternity.

These experiences, of course, need not be confined to children and young people, but can occur at any stage of the life cycle.² We are taught by parents and teachers, and as parents and teachers we ourselves teach, that they are abnormal, atypical, possibly even pathological, and at best, anomalous—the negative story lines again. But I think these experiences represent *what should be the norm*. We should be taught to encourage these experiences because EHEs make us aware of dimensions of reality that our world and our species literally cannot live without.

If we were to put these experiences *first* in our lives, they would naturally guide us, although it is important to share experiences and to compare notes with others, and to read and study about similar experiences and become aware of as many cultural approaches to such experiences as possible. I think that through synchronicity and other EHEs, and by means of follow-up study, we would be further led to take up spiritual practices such as meditation, contemplation, yoga, prayer, biofeedback, dream interpretation, journal writing, study groups, writing one's EHE autobiography, and other ways of fostering EHEs and our perception and cognizance of them. By our sharing we would create a vast interconnected web in which each person helps those who are newer to the path than they are, and in turn, is aided by those who are more advanced. Nor is this chain purely human—the web includes all life forms, most of whom provide the everlasting arms that sustain human life, and whose very beings serve as metaphors of connection. The time has come for humans to give back to life, not simply to exploit its largess. We need to honor the life force in every living thing, for it is that same force that impels our own lives.

Out of such a web of interconnection we can form a new view of human nature, a new way of being in the world, and a whole new culture that has its base in Eternity, though its many forms have their locus in time and space. We need to know in our flesh and bones, in the beautiful lines of Gerald Heard (1940, 168), that "Eternity is not approaching us across the days and years. It is about us, within us, and is attained the moment we turn to it." EHEs provide us with a taste of Eternity. They are moments of grace. And a moment of grace is not a reward for what we already are but a hint, a promise, of what we may become by living henceforth from the vision revealed in that moment in such a way that we come to live from Eternity, from that connected self that is the More in human experience.

People who have mystical experiences report that they are aware not so much of bringing something new into being; rather, it is as if they finally recognized the fullness of what has been present right along. It is not so much that we make new connections rationally as it is a case of falling into them, effortlessly, as a hand slips into a well-fitting glove. A contemporary poet, Elizabeth Herron, writes that she had been in a depressed state, feeling that her world was drab and colorless. She felt she was "a tiny kernel inside my body, adrift amid necessities and obligations, oppressed by my separateness, cut off from the wellsprings of my soul" (quoted in Vaughan, 1979, 72). Then she took a walk to a nearby pond, took off her clothes, and jumped in. As she surfaced, a bird called from across a meadow. Then, she writes: "Suddenly, I was at the stillpoint. The bird's call was my voice. We were separate and yet one. I was out there and in here. . . . The dimension of the infinite was everywhere." She had become "conterminous with the More." Here, again, the individual recognizes that at the center of herself she meets the whole world.

Becoming aware of the full nature of who and what we are is not a matter of "dreaming dreams and seeing visions." It is the most practical work in which we can engage. For if we lived from the selves these accounts testify to, we would have changed lives. In this country, at least, most of us tend to live our lives in a very rational, linear fashion. We are imbued with the conviction that one can only move one step at a time, that causality does not happen at a distance, that the way to evaluate situations and make decisions is through rational inference and logic, and we tend to blot out the chaotic aspects of existence that would give the lie to this neat but highly encapsulated view. But if we studied, meditated on, discussed, and shared what our EHEs tell us about reality, and especially, about the nature of our selves, it would be very different.

If we knew we were not bound by time, space, personality, death, our culture, our species, or even our skin, we would live in a wholly different way, and in an entirely different world. Instead of planning our lives step by step, making sure we know the "right" people and make all the right contacts, we would go within to discern where *we* are in any given situation, that is, that Self that is the More. We would become conscious of the Self we all are and ask that Self for guidance, listen to its promptings concerning how we should live and what we should do, and remain constantly open to the new, the unexpected, and even the feared and the abhorred. If Western society as a whole extolled the unitive life before all else, the undreamed of could become a reality. It is no longer just our individual transcendent selves that hunger for it—the needs of our planet demand it.

When confronted with the fact that our very identities are involved with the stories we choose to tell about our exceptional experiences, I hope more people will see the great benefit—even in terms of sheer selfishness—of composing a positive story for a transcendental identity rather than a compressed, mean, limited, negative identity whose main motivation is to exploit, "get even with," or strike back at the world that gave it birth. May the day come when all humans are aware of the singing joy of knowing both that what they see without comes from within, and that within their very selves they harbor the immensities of the

universe. Then inside and outside will be viewed as connected, or as James wrote, "conterminous," not separate as we have been taught.

At base, EHEs are harbingers of conversion. They are moments of grace that life gives us gratuitously. But whether or not we change by moving in the direction they indicate is up to us. As always, the choice is ours. George Fisk (1993), in his commentary on the paper I gave last year (White, 1993), said that hard evidence is needed lest people follow EHEs into devilish pursuits as in possession, satanism, cult behavior, and other ways in which humans can bring harm to other people, other life forms, and themselves. I could not disagree more, much as I honor and respect George. Four centuries of insistence on "hard" evidence is largely responsible for creating the rift between our sense of self and the rest of life, including other humans.

Nonetheless, George is correct that it is dangerous to follow up any whim and fancy just because it is emotionally compelling. But if we go back far enough in the Western tradition, the only rule we really need is still there, waiting for us to take it up and follow it. It is the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." If one has visions and compulsions to kill, maim, exploit, abuse, or in any way harm another being, human or animal, then it is not an authentic experience. The touchstone of the authenticity of an EHE is not that it can be underwritten by laboratory research but that when it is lived into its full life it will foster growth and connection between the experiencer and all those with whom he or she may come into contact. To be sure, experiencers may get negative reactions from others, depending on what stage those others are at in their spiritual growth. People who have not awakened to their own EHEs may laugh, deride, and weave all kinds of negative story lines to explain away others' experiences and even put down the experiencers. But the experiencers themselves cannot help but feel compassion, tolerance, and good will toward such persons, because their experiences have made them aware of the basic oneness of everyone and everything. Thus, a negative spiral of retaliation will not develop. Moreover, experiencers will feel no need to insist that others adopt whatever approach is working for them: their passion is directed at praying that each person will awaken to their *own* authentic calling in response to their own moments of grace—their own exceptional human experiences. Each of us must follow our own unique EHEs to find and forge our own identity with the More—but I believe that the More each one will discover in his or her own way will turn out, in essence, to be the *same*.

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Endnotes

¹ Several books, in addition to Feinstein and Krippner's, are about using fairy tales and myths to develop one's personal story. But I find them lacking in one very important—to me, the most important—respect: they do not deal openly with EHEs, although they may given them peripheral attention. One of the most important aspects of myths and fairy tales is "magic," "grace," "synchronicity"—that is, exceptional human experience. Although space does not permit developing this theme here, I do want to point out that the whole point of an exceptional experience, to my mind, is to give us a jump start on developing our personal myths and living our own fairy tales. I think everyone's life, no matter what their circumstances, can become a good fairy tale, if it incorporates the EHEs life gives us. No one is without grace. It is our EHEs that provide the authentic magic for our lives.

² I want to emphasize the importance of collecting and studying as many of these experiences as possible, not simply to provide cases for researchers, writers, and TV and radio show producers, but for persons who counsel exceptional human experiencers and most of all, for the experiencers themselves. I am trying to raise funds to collect as many published and unpublished experiences as possible and enter them in a computer database so that examples of specific types and qualities of experience can be located quickly as needed. For example, when one has an OBE one may only be aware of negative story lines—or it is even conceivable that a person doesn't even know of the existence of out-of-body experiences. This can lead, at one extreme, to an inflated view of one's self-importance and at the other, to the fear that one is going crazy. What a boon if such persons could contact a center where they could obtain copies of, say, 50 OBEs. Or take a person who experienced a ball of light, which somehow was related to one's dying grandfather (Hoffman, in fact, does report one such case). It would certainly be helpful to be able to pull up 25 or so other experiences in which balls of light associated with persons were featured. Most importantly, I feel that any account of an EHE can serve as a modern parable—a teaching story. We can receive guidance, strength, courage, and wisdom from the experiences of others almost as much as if we had had them ourselves. I would appreciate it if readers would send me their experiences and/or copies of published cases, properly referenced. Unless specifically asked to identify the experiencer, all first-person accounts would be entered in the database anonymously.

Rhea A. White is a reference librarian and editor of both the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* and *Exceptional Human Experience*. She is director/founder of the Parapsychology Sources of Information Center, 2 Plane Tree Lane, Dix Hills, NY 11746.

ANECDOTES OF EXCEPTIONAL HUMAN EXPERIENCES
OR PSI LABORATORY REPORTS:
ON WHAT BASIS SHOULD WE BELIEVE?

Dr. John F. Miller, III

Abstract:

The reason most commonly offered for the belief in the paranormal is personal experience. Of the two classes of experience, anecdotal reports of individuals and scientific reports of psi laboratories, which is the most convincing?

Some parapsychologists believe that scientific research supports the conclusion that psi exists; but most scientists are unconvinced, doubting both the assumptions and methodological practices of psi research. The intellectual framework of science is conceptually unfriendly to and even incompatible with the paranormal.

While scientists disagree concerning what is statistically significant in parapsychological research, the public remains unconvinced by numerical differences. But what is convincing are experiences, related by reputable people whose integrity is unchallenged and whose reports are consistent with those of others claiming similar experiences.

We know either by others' descriptions or by our own acquaintance. Those who have had exceptional human experiences know that they occur. Others must trust the anecdotal testimony of others.

Introduction:

Two decades ago the well-respected sociologist Andrew Greeley discovered that "almost a fifth of the American population reports frequent paranormal experiences." Greeley's research also revealed that nearly sixty percent of Americans at some time had experienced extra-sensory perception. A 1991 Gallup poll indicated that fully one third of adult Americans believed in telepathy, and one fourth claimed to have experienced these phenomena themselves. Although fewer in number, those who claimed to have had clairvoyant or psychokinetic experiences was significantly high as well. This poll confirmed the findings of previous polls that the reason offered most commonly for belief in the paranormal was personal experience.

What, then, should the intelligent, but cautious, inquirer into the paranormal believe? Should he believe that those polled are crazy, or liars and charlatans, or perchance suffering from some psychological need to call attention to themselves? Perhaps there are some who would fall into these categories, certainly there are those whose "exceptional experiences" are delusional and drug-induced, but these are not the ones we are concerned with today. Rather, for our purposes, we shall assume that there are honest and sincere

people giving truthful accounts of phenomena they have experienced.

So once again we ask: What should the intelligent, but cautious, inquirer into the paranormal believe? Should he believe anecdotal accounts of exceptional human experiences, or only scientific evidence, positive or negative, adduced in the laboratory? Should our cautious inquirer believe the findings of researchers convinced that their laboratory experiments support the contention that psi exists, or should he accept only the conclusions of those skeptics who discount such "scientific" findings as untrustworthy?

For Whom is Evidence Convincing?

Foundations of Parapsychology surveys over a hundred years' history and experimental research in parapsychology. Some researchers of parapsychology, such as Dr. Charles T. Tart, are convinced that psi exists. Dr. Tart writes:

The findings of scientific parapsychology over the last century (more than a thousand parapsychological experiments carried out in accordance with quite strict scientific methodology) have repeatedly demonstrated that para-conceptual events do happen. Three forms of extrasensory perception (ESP) have been thoroughly demonstrated. People can sometimes read others' thoughts (telepathy), directly perceive the state of the physical world (clairvoyance), or predict a logically unpredictable future event (precognition). There is also a form of action at a distance, psychokinesis (PK), where mechanical, electronic, atomic, and biological processes can sometimes be altered merely by wishing it. Collectively these four phenomena are currently called psi phenomena. No known physical energies can satisfactorily account for them. There may be other kinds of psi, but only these four have been researched to a large enough extent for me to feel extremely confident of their existence.

But is the scientific community, generally, convinced that psi exists or that exceptional human experiences are genuine, rather than hallucinatory, data of human consciousness? In short, are these classes of experience accepted as veridical by the scientific community at large? The answer is that, although some researchers are thoroughly convinced that psi exists, most scientists would roundly reject that claim.

As Ted Schultz, editor of the compilation The Fringes of Reason, puts it, "Parapsychology has a problem. It's been around for over a hundred years, yet it hasn't demonstrated the reality of its basic premise that psi exists--at least not to the satisfaction of the scientific community at large" (p. 69).

In a recent issue of Science News, an article entitled "Scientists Peer into the Mind's Psi" summarizes the concerns of the scientific community:

Suspicion of research into peculiar and unexplained forms of communication, known as psi effects, runs deep among psychologists. For a century, reports of psi and other psychic phenomena have often dissipated in a mist of poor experimental design, wishful thinking about chance statistical results, and outright cheating.

Skeptical doubt concerning the assumptions as well as the methodological practices of parapsychological research is the intellectual hallmark of the general scientific community (Kurtz, 1985). First of all, they would assert, a rigorous and critical analysis of those experiments which have purported to support psi and ESP claims may, in fact, actually cast doubts that the experiments really do substantiate their claims (Hansel 1980).

Secondly, many scientists are ideologically unwilling to accept the claims of those researchers who believe in psi: "Unfortunately, many parapsychologists appear to be committed to belief in psi on the basis of a metaphysical or spiritualist world-view that they wish to vindicate." From the point of view of the skeptical scientists, "since these claims contravene a substantial body of existing scientific knowledge, in order for us to modify our basic principles--and we must be prepared to do so--the evidence must be extremely strong. But that it is, remains highly questionable" (Fringes, p. 69).

In this regard, we might draw an analogy of asking Sir Isaac Newton to give up his world view in favor of Einstein's. From Sir Isaac's perspective, such a request would be tantamount to asking him to accept an irrational form of magic which reason, as he understood it, would completely bar from the realm of possibility.

"How," Sir Isaac would surely reply, "can you ask me to believe something that I cannot verify through my five senses or which is so contrary to reason? What can you possibly mean, for example, when you say that time moves more slowly as an object accelerates?" Given the state of knowledge of his time, in the absence of atomic accelerators and atom bombs, Newton would be justified in his skepticism.

I need not remind this audience that a similar situation exists today in the area of parapsychological research. Today's "Newtonian" scientists seem to be saying that nothing less than the detonation of an atomic psi bomb will convince them even to consider the evidence of another dimension of reality!

The eminent philosopher and scientist, Mario Bunge, makes the case for the skeptical position concerning the existence of psi and the genuineness of other paranormal or parapsychological phenomena. It is his view that the scientist should adopt the stance of methodological skepticism.

Methodological skepticism is a methodological, practical, and moral stance. Indeed, those who adopt it believe that it is foolish, imprudent,

and morally wrong, to announce, practice, or preach important ideas or practices that have not been put to the test or, worse, that have been shown in a conclusive manner to be utterly false, inefficient, or harmful. . . .

. . . We disbelieve falsity and suspend judgment concerning what has not been checked, but we believe, at least temporarily, whatever passed the requisite tests. (Bunge, 1992, p. 378)

He further asserts that "It is impossible to evaluate an idea in and by itself, independently of some system of ideas that is taken as a basis or standard." Rhea White, for decades a prominent researcher in parapsychology, has come to the conclusion that "the mindset that informs science (including the science of parapsychology) was not capable of shedding any deep insight on these subjects" (1994a, p.3) One cannot help but note the irony that the skeptic of the paranormal will launch his attacks upon psi and ESP claims from an intellectual framework which is conceptually unfriendly to or even incompatible with the paranormal! Bunge has explicitly said as much:

In every case the methodological or moderate skeptic presupposes--albeit seldom explicitly -- that scientific theories and methods satisfy certain philosophical requirements. These are (a) materialism: everything in the universe is concrete or material, though not necessarily corporeal, and everything behaves lawfully; (b) realism: the world exists independently of those who study it, and moreover it can be known at least partially and gradually; (c) rationalism: our ideas ought to be internally consistent and they should cohere with one another; (d) empiricism: every idea about real things should be empirically testable; and (e) systemism: the data and hypotheses of science are not stray but constitute a system.

Pseudoscience does not abide by those principles-- as a consequence of which it seldom delivers truth and it never corrects itself. (p. 379)

Therefore, wherever parapsychological, paranormal, or psi claims are made, some scientists feel that it may not be necessary even to investigate them, if they clash with well-tested scientific or philosophical principles! Bunge remarks that "this strategy is certainly cheaper than naive empiricism" (p. 380). William G. Braud, Research Director of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, laments that "conventional scientists are reluctant to explore claims of anomalous processes that have strong spiritual or nonmaterialistic implications" (1994, p.62).

Whereas the learned and distinguished Professor Bunge may dismiss the finding of psi laboratory reports on the basis of methodological skepticism, others have attempted to explain away psychic experiences as being merely illusory.

Dr. Susan Blackmore, a Ph.D. in parapsychology from the University of Surrey in England and a researcher in the field for well over a decade is the author of Beyond the Body and The Adventures of a Parapsychologist.

In an article entitled "Psychic Experiences: Psychic Illusions," she writes unequivocally that "psychic experiences are illusions of causality" (1992, p. 368). In her judgment, "psychic experiences" are really instances of coincidence. Where no causal explanation for the experience is immediately forthcoming, she says, ESP or psi is supplied as the explanation. In her judgment, the mistake here is treating "chance events as connected" and seeking "for explanations where none is required" (p. 368). According to Blackmore, in addition to these "Illusions of Connection," there are four other classes of "illusions" which are responsible for the ascribing of psi or ESP to people:

"Illusions of Control" (assuming that one has personal control over coincidental events)

"Illusions of Pattern and Randomness" (reading causal patterns into what is merely random)

"Illusions of Form" (such as seeing ghosts or apparitions or seeking paranormal explanation where none is required), and

"Illusions of Memory" (selectively remembering coincidences and interpreting them as paranormal). (pp. 370-374)

Taken together, these classes are said to explain why people believe that they have had ESP or psi experiences.

Anthropologist James W. Lett offers four sociological reasons why paranormal beliefs are so pervasive in our society: the uncertainty of the public, the unreliability of the media, the inadequacy of education, and the inaccuracy of the American world view (1992, p. 383).

Uncertainty is said to lead people to seek security in the paranormal. In the words of the late Isaac Asimov: "Inspect every piece of pseudoscience and you will find a security blanket, a thumb to suck, a skirt to hold" (1986:212). For Asimov, paranormal explanations give people the illusion of meaning and fill their emotional voids. Moreover, "the entertainment media unashamedly fuel the public passion for the paranormal" (Ibid.) In addition, "the American public-educational system fails to teach students the basic principles" of the scientific method. Finally, Americans believe in souls, God, an afterlife, and similar unprovable items, all of which lend credence to a paranormal conceptual framework.

Let us admit from the outset that people differ with regard to what they take to be reasonable beliefs. There are no univocal standards of rationality, no unequivocal criteria

for reasonableness. On the one hand, there are those for whom only the scientific world view, with its testable hypotheses and empirical foundation, is reasonable. It is clear from the above remarks that there are those "hardcore skeptics" for whom virtually any positive findings of psi laboratory experiments will be unconvincing.

On the other hand, there are those who hold that certain classes of phenomena may require a metaphysical conceptual framework for their explanation. These more "moderate" skeptics will be convinced of at least the possibility of positive results in psi laboratory testing. And finally, there are those whose experiences--indeed, their most significant and profound experiences--convince them of the reality of the paranormal.

An example: Research on telepathy, or what psychologists call "anomalous processes of information or energy transfer," was published in a recent issue of Psychological Bulletin, as reported in the January 29, 1994 issue of Science News. The research was done by psychologists Daryl J. Bem, of Cornell University, and the late Charles Honorton, of the University of Edinburgh, on what is called the "ganzfeld" or "whole field." Bem asserts that "the results are statistically significant" to indicate communication between the sender and the receiver.

In the ganzfeld procedure, receivers and senders were in separate, acoustically-sealed rooms. The receivers described their thoughts and images during a half-hour period, during which time the senders would have concentrated on a "target." Later, the receivers would be shown a sequences of images containing the target and three decoys and would be asked to rate the images as to their similarity to the images experienced during the ganzfeld period (Science News). A hit was scored when the receiver rated the target as most like the ganzfeld image. "Overall, receivers obtained a hit about every third session. Compared with an expected random hit rate of one in four, this represents a modest, statistically significant effect, Bem and Honorton argue."

It was reported that Carl Sargent, at Cambridge, was successful in replicating Bem and Honorton's results of the ganzfeld procedure (Blackmore, 1989, p. 72). But when Dr. Susan Blackmore tried to duplicate the experiments, she found that although she, too, got lots of "hits," and even seemed to pick up every detail of the picture when her brother was the sender, still "the overall results of the experiments were again at chance. Those close correspondences were, I am sure, just the sort of coincidences you would expect to encounter in a series of such sessions" (p. 72).

Difficulties with the statistical laboratory approach:

To a scientist, the difference between one "hit" (or success) in three verses one in four is statistically "significant." But to a layman, this is hardly convincing! What would be convincing is precisely what Blackmore dismissed as "chance" in her analysis of the ganzfeld procedure, namely the fact that she seemed to pick up virtually every detail of the picture when her brother was the sender! The fact that

"the overall results" were not significantly different from what would be predicted on the basis of chance would not strike a layman as significant.

A Personal Anecdote:

Let me share an example from my own experience. I used to date, many years ago, a lady who lived in Dallas some forty miles from where I lived. I would often spend Saturdays with her, and in the evening we would go to dinner. One particular Saturday, Sandy was very tired, so I spent the afternoon playing with her young daughter, Devereau, who was about 12 years old. When it came time to go to dinner, since I was driving home after the meal, we decided to take two cars. I asked Devereau to ride with me, and she consented. On the way to the restaurant, we played a game, in which I would think of a number and "send" it mentally to her. She was to imagine a blank screen in her mind on which the number would appear. I told her that I would mentally tell her the number, as well.

We began with a number from one to five, which she correctly got. Next, I "sent" her a number from six to ten, and again she got that number. A third and a fourth time I sent her a number, from ten to fifteen, and from sixteen to twenty; and each time she correctly got the number. We then tried a series of colors, and then fruits; and for eight consecutive times, Devereau correctly "got" the information or image which I "sent." On the ninth time, she missed; and at that point I stopped the game.

Now anyone who has engaged in this sort of exercise knows how difficult it is to hold the mind in a concentrated state, to "blank" the mind so that it is fully receptive. Devereau's miss on the ninth attempt signaled to me that she was either tired or perhaps bored with the game. However, had we been in a parapsychological lab, we may have been forced to have continued the procedure for another twenty or thirty more times! Then, the statistical number of "hits" may have been dramatically reduced, perhaps even to the probability of "chance." But that is utter foolishness!

In December of 1992, I attended in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, a meeting of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of the Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP). To "prove" to their already skeptical audience that psi did not exist, one session began with two attempts to "send" images to the audience. The sender was to look at a series of 20-25 cards, with symbols on them, and attempt telepathically to transmit them to the audience, which was asked to record their impressions. This was done very rapidly, with only a few seconds between transmissions.

I used to belong to a metaphysical group which practiced such telepathic exercises, and it was obvious to me that the method which was being used by CSICOP could be predicted to fail. First, the audience was naturally skeptical; second, the "sender" himself did not believe that the procedure would work. Third, only a few seconds were allowed between each transmission, not nearly enough time for most people to still the mind to receive a new symbol.

So when the time came for the second set of transmissions, I volunteered. I believed that I might be able to transmit more effectively, since I had done this before and since I trusted my ability to concentrate and mentally say the name of the symbol (triangle, square, etc.), in addition to projecting it visually with my mind. But I met with no more success than the first.

I know from my own experience with the group with which I practiced that some people are better receivers for a particular person, and certain individuals are better senders for others. There were some in the group with whom I seemed to have a natural resonance such that they could pick up what images I was sending. And there were others from whom I could pick up much more easily what images they were projecting. But who would be the best sender/receiver pair was a matter of trial and error, not a matter of friendship, or special relationship, at least as far as I could determine.

Now in the case of Devereau and myself, I had spent somewhat over three hours with the child. It may have been that a natural mental resonance developed such that she and I were able to communicate more easily telepathically than would otherwise have been possible. Also, I did "reinforce" her trust in her ability by informing her, quite honestly each time, that she had correctly gotten the number, or color, or fruit which I was projecting. In many psi laboratory procedures, the receiver receives no such a positive feedback. That, too, may be a limitation of such procedures.

But regardless of psi laboratory findings, what do we know about telepathy from our own experiences? If we are tuned in to a person and really concentrating on what is being said, is it not usual to know what word a person is fumbling for when he pauses to find just the right word? If we were to ask members of virtually any group of people whether they had ever had the experience of thinking about someone, and the phone rings, and it is the very person about whom they were thinking, would we not find that many would have had such an experience?

If we asked, further, whether anyone in the group had ever had the experience of thinking about a person and was on the very brink of calling that person, indeed picked up the phone to call--the phone hasn't rung--and there is the very person on the other end of the line, again would we not find that perhaps as many as half in the group had experienced such an occurrence? Is it legitimate to call so common an experience "chance"?

What is true of telepathy is similarly true of precognition. Ask members of any group whether they had ever had dreams or intuitions of specific events which were yet to happen, and again many in the group would attest to having had such experiences. I recall that when I lived in New York City, my Mom had sent me an electric heater. When I plugged it in one cold afternoon, a fuse in the apartment house blew. The man in the apartment below had been ironing, and apparently our two sockets were on the same electrical line.

That night I had a most unusual--indeed, fantastic--dream. I dreamt that my superintendent came up to my apartment and explained to me that I could no longer use the electric heater. He picked it up, leaned it against the hot water radiator in the corner of the room, and assured me that, when the radiator got hot, it would heat the electric heater, which then would radiate heat into the room. Utterly absurd! Fantastic!

But the very next afternoon, this precise drama unfolded. The knock at the door was my superintendent who, in the exact words I had "heard" the night before, told me that I could not use the electric heater. He picked up the heater, leaned it against the radiator; and, as I listened in utter amazement--I had never had a "precognitive" dream before-- he proceeded to say, in words which I knew precisely before he uttered them, that when the radiator got hot, the heater would Amazing! But if you ask your friends, I would bet that they can tell you similar tales.

The Nature of Exceptional Human Experiences:

I would contend that the very nature of most exceptional human experiences makes them unfit subjects for laboratory testing. They are unique, often occurring but once in a person's lifetime, and may be peculiar to the particular individual. As such, they are not replicable, at will, for the pleasure of laboratory scientists! The experiences of the Academy's panel on exceptional human experiences at last year's annual meeting makes this evident.

It is obvious that Boyce Batey's incredible experience of unity/identity with God, boundlessness and timelessness, a sense of cosmic meaning and the cosmic direction toward good, was, in his words, "the most profound experience of my life, an experience that I have since sought to reexperience in all its splendor. . . . It is the single most important event in my life. . . . It was more real than anything I've experienced before or since." But it has not, in thirty-eight subsequent years, ever happened again!

Take the experience of Dr. Grace Crowley when the car in which she and her husband John were driving was struck by an eighty-ton trailer truck: "As the door opened, everything went into slow motion. I felt as though unseen hands were lifting me up and gently lowering me to the sidewalk where I landed in a sitting position." She was reassured: "It is not yet your time!" Are we to duplicate such an experience for scientific study by having Grace and John be hit by another eighty-ton truck! (Hardly, for then it may be their time!)

Beverly Hartley conveyed accounts of three exceptional experiences: the first in the form of a vision which occurred on a summer morning's drive; the second which, again on a drive, told her "the meaning of the Crucifixion is Empathy"; and the third, which she described as "one of the most remarkable experiences" of her life, an out-of-body experience, informed her that her consciousness endured apart from her body. But, again, these occurred in everyday settings, and would not be likely to occur in a psychologist's laboratory.

Or what of my own experience of hours of bliss, joy, and ecstasy, occasioned by "The Man of La Mancha." It is not every time one sees that play that such an exceptional experience occurs. I had seen that play numerous times before, and no such experience had occurred.

I dared to suggest that my own experience--and perhaps Boyce Batey, Grace Crowley, and Beverly Hartley would concur concerning theirs--was given by "grace." It was hardly something which could be produced, by an individual's will, in a scientific laboratory! The very model of science, which assumes that experiences are effects of causes which can be replicated, is itself called into question by experiences of this sort!

We must remember that exceptional human experiences are both existential and historical, not scientific; they occur but once, sometimes in unique settings, sometimes in response to unique situations and stimuli, and as such they are not verifiable by repetition under laboratory conditions.

Every meditation does not produce memorable experiences, every night does not yield significant dreams, every operation does not occasion out-of-body experiences--but some do. The potential exists; however, circumstances and the individual's state of consciousness may preclude the actual occurrence of a psi or exceptional experience.

Exceptional human experiences bear a resemblance to three classes of experience: aesthetic, athletic, and religious. Great artists and musicians and exceptional athletes sometimes operate in a "zone," a unique and qualitatively different consciousness, universal yet rarely achieved. One could sense it in Don Larson's perfectly pitched world series game. Superstars such as Michael Jordan achieve this exceptional state of "zone" consciousness more often than lesser stars; but the experience is "exceptional" nonetheless.

Similarly, one may sense the extraordinary consciousness of the artist when one stands in the presence of such great works of art as the statue of David by Michelangelo, or Rembrandt's "The Night Watch." And one might sense the remarkable states of religious consciousness in accounts of St. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, the "dark night of the soul" of St. John of the Cross, or St. John's experience recorded in Revelations, among others. These historical events were truly exceptional.

Historical events happen but once. But they do happen! Exceptional human experiences really are exceptional; they are the exception to the norm. Those privileged to have had such experiences, mystical or psychic, have also had the disappointing realization that they are, most regrettably, the exception. What would we give to experience them again? But they may not return. For that is their nature.

Yet it is also their nature that they are universal. They happen to others. Anecdotal accounts of similar exceptional human experiences can be found universally in literature of various cultures, over millennia of time. Indeed, psi and ESP experiences occur universally, in the

lives of ordinary, common folk. Whether of precognition or telepathy, psi or deja vu experiences are not uncommon.

Conclusion:

May we, then, trust anecdotal accounts? Knowledge is of two kinds: what we know by others' description, and what we know by our own personal acquaintance. If we trust the integrity of the person telling the anecdote, we have good reason to believe the account. On the other hand, the anecdotal account may resonate with our own personal experience. In either case, it is important to "confess" them, as Rhea White urges (1994b).

It is true that certain experiences of the exceptional sort can be duplicated, more or less, maybe less rather than more. But others simply remain unique, disappointingly so. How many of us would give almost everything we possess to be able to have, just once again, that most exceptional experience of our lives!

So, at least at this stage in our evolutionary journey, and at this level of our psychic or spiritual development, we may be unable to duplicate, for the purposes of science, our most profound and life-altering experience. Perhaps it will not always be so. Maybe in this next century, or in the next, we shall evolve, or others will, and they will at last be able to be able provide science with unambiguous, laboratory-repeatable experiments in psi, ESP, or EHEs. Or, as Rhea White suggests, maybe "postmodern" parapsychological research will become "feminine" in its modality: "intuitive, participatory, and experiential" (1994a, p. 6). But for the present at least, those of us who believe may have to continue to trust anecdotal accounts for our assurance, for our hope, and for our belief.

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Dr. John F. Miller, III, is a philosopher, metaphysical teacher, writer, and lecturer. He lives at 1004 Cedar Lake Drive, Tampa, Florida, 33612.

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